

3

天酒之瓢

天酒之瓢

天酒之瓢

hpc.com

Knights & Magic - Volume 1 - Chapter

Prologue

Take your favorite novel wherever you go
novelepubs.xyz

It was already evening when the glaring sun set on the horizon, its shadows expanding across the territory. The roads absorbed a lot of heat during the day, but released it back into the air at this time. It was going to be another night too warm to sleep comfortably.

This was K city's K district, a place where the above scene was commonplace.

The city station was surrounded by skyscrapers, each accommodating a myriad of companies. 'K Softworks', a mid-sized software company, sat on the 4th floor.

In its cool air-conditioned office, several men stared silently at their computer screens. The atmosphere was tense. For a mid-sized company's employees, their daily workload was always heavy, but today's load was exceptionally heavy.

"We only have 3 days left to finish it..."

A man sitting at one end of the office mumbled with a hint of despair. He was currently battling with a time bomb ticking towards an explosion, also known as a deadline. Due to the downturn of the nation's economy, the anxious sales team had grudgingly accepted the contract, even though its demands were unreasonable. Even during the planning phase, the project managed by him had little room for error. Repeated failures made it even more perilous; the situation could only be described as 'hellish'. And there were even more pressing issues.

"Nakai Section Chief, Sato is down! He's not reacting even when we splash him with water!"

"Nakai Section Chief, we won't make it in time if we don't finish the coding today."

“...Nakai-san, Takeda’s desk has a resignation letter on it...”

“Ah— Shut up! How can we meet the deadline with things like this—!”

The man with his back against the corner, Section Chief Nakai, finally broke down. He hugged his head and rested it on his table.

There wasn’t any time to waste, but he knew the task was impossible with the lack of manpower... The deadline was looming, but there weren’t any obvious solutions, pushing his psyche to the breaking point.

“Nakai-san.”

“What is it now!?”

He raised his head after hearing someone address him, and as he opened his eyes a man with a gentle smile appeared.

“I have finished the case on my side, and I am ready to assist you.”

“Oh... Kurata... Are you fine with joining us?”

The pain on Nakai’s face was swept away, like a man who saw a ray of light in the midst of despair.

“I have browsed through the specification manual and I’ve gotten the gist of the situation. Can you let me handle the progress management?”

“Of... Of course, I might as well give you my password, you can flip through the management folders too. Take care of all that please.”

“Eh, Nakai-san, I can’t manage all that... Erm, the coding parts are holding back the progress, let me settle this...”

The man speaking with Nakai, Kurata Tsubasa, sat down on the chair prepared by Nakai and started working immediately. He typed in code in the editor, all-the-while reading the progress reports and the specification manual. As he did this, he gave instructions to the colleagues around him.

“Ensure the testing machine is operational, test analyst-san, take this opportunity to rest. Erm, we will begin intensive testing after 12. For coding... Tatsu-san, can you complete 2 modules? Yes, I will do the other 10. Kiba, there are some weird parts in the specification manual, please fix them and resume testing.”

He was 28 years old, and considered a part of the younger generation within the workplace, but no one questioned his instructions. This was due to his track record in the company. Since he started working here, he was commonly an inspiration to his half-dead coworkers. Now that he was on the case, it meant the job’s end was in sight. Humans are realistic creatures, if they can see the ending, they can endure it no matter how tough it is.

“Alright, that should do it. I will start coding.”

“Hey, Kurata, will you be fine? 10 modules... That is no laughing matter.”

“Nakai-san, did you forget? My actual profession is a programmer.”

With his eyes half closed, a fearless smile appeared on Kurata’s gentle face. He put his fingers on the keyboard, and all 10 fingers started dancing at a frightening speed. He typed in code on several editors that were open on his screen, processing the data like a torrent. The mature man sitting opposite him, Tatsu, threw himself into his work when he heard the amazing typing sound.

“As expected of the “Last Line of Defense” for the company, he has been handling all the troublesome cases so far... I have to keep up.”

Everyone put their heart into their work, and the sluggish battle improved dramatically.

◆ ◆ ◆

The radio broadcast announced the time. The clock on the wall indicated it was 5:15pm — time to get off work. According to the company policy, working hours had ended, but

Kurata simply stretched his back and rotated his tired shoulders.

He had been salvaging this case for three days. Today was the dreaded deadline, but the atmosphere was no longer as desperate as it was three days prior. The case was thought to be hopeless by everyone before, yet it was rescued under his expert hands.

Thanks to him finishing the programming in one day, and the other team members working without rest, they managed to barely finish the product before the deadline. Although Kurata finished so much work in such a short amount of time, he managed each part perfectly, a miraculous talent beyond comprehension. Sadly, his skill was outstanding because he was always handed the troublesome cases.

After the long series of battles, empty cans of coffee and energy drinks were piled up like gravestones on his desk. Looking at his side, he could see the warriors (test analysts) smiling peacefully, collapsed on beds made out of chairs. Kurata had decreased his sleeping hours to the bare minimum, and he too felt that it was time to rest up.

“Alright, the client acknowledged the receipt of the product! We are done! Great news everyone, now we can rest easy!”

Kurata woke and sleepily saw the elated Nakai in a victory pose. He thought about going home to rest, but decided to nap for a while. By the time he woke up to go home, it was already time for the last train.

Several days after the death march, the end of the month was here. Speaking of the end of the month, people were thinking of — that’s right, the gospel of all working adults, payday.

Kurata turned off the computer and prepared to leave in a hurry. He was not alone, as his colleagues also started to leave. Following popular trends, companies had cut down the working hours of office workers. The companies have the obligation to let their staff leave on time, especially on payday. Although it was an obligation, this rule was often overlooked when things got hectic. But compared to the hellish experience of the past few days, it was much more relaxed now.

Today was a happy Friday. Some were rushing to meet their family, others were gathering with their friends, getting ready to splurge. There were others who just wanted to rest at home. Everybody was different, but for those getting their salary, the day they looked forward to which also coincided with the weekend made it a happy occasion.

Kurata was the same. Several colleagues who went through the death march gathered at his side.

“Kurata, want to get a drink? You were a big help, the first one is on me.”

Nakai made a drinking gesture, and the others who worked on the project such as Tatsu and Kiba were standing behind him. Kurata was about to join them, but he remembered his schedule and hesitated.

“Ah— Sorry Nakai-san, I have an engagement, maybe next time.”

“Nakai-san, today is the day, Kurata’s hobby...”

“Oh... That. Can’t be helped, don’t skip out next time.”

“Okay.”

Kurata watched the group leave, and headed toward his destination as well. The young, talented man known as the “Last Line of Defense”, who was depended on by everyone, had a unique hobby well known within the company.

On this weekend, the streets, humid with the summer heat were crowded with office workers getting off work. The way to the station was packed with people. After walking some distance away, the traffic eased.

“Over. Time. Pay! Get!”

A man— Kurata, yelled in front of the ATM. If he had done that in front of a manned counter, he would probably be reported to the police for acting suspiciously.

His emotion stemmed from the cold figures displayed on the ATM screen. The cases he handled were usually stressful and dangerous, but his efforts paid off in the form of overtime pay, so his savings increased steadily.

Without smiling, Kurata withdrew some cash and hurried towards his destination. His movements had no hesitation, a sign that he had gone through this route many times. A building appeared in front of him shortly. It was a major electronics store in the shopping centre. On the 3rd floor was a huge toys department— his goal.

◆◆◆

A few hours later, a man left the toys department with the store's closing music playing in the background..

“As expected of the end of month sales. This is great.”

The man carried two full bags in each hand, both double layered to prevent tearing. His backpack was also bulging in a strange shape. His bags were filled with plastic models. He was a ‘model nerd’.

“Surfacer, paint and tools have been resupplied... the modeling festival shall begin...”

For his hectic lifestyle, the shopping spree on payday and the modeling festival was his biggest joy. It might have been the dull and normal lifestyle taking a toll on him, but the number of models he purchased increased every year. It finally became a monthly habit, and he was now completely addicted.

He wore his silly smile, walking home with his bags happily. The apartment he stayed in was some distance away from the company. The station sat between his residence and the company. He needed to make a detour whenever he visited the electronics store, but it wasn't a big deal since he got what he was after. Kurata made his way past the quiet residential zone humming joyfully. The traffic was very light at this hour.

The sound of an engine broke the silence, and the oncoming headlights restricted his vision. With the lights from the distance blinding him, he hurried to the side of the road. The road was relatively wide, but it would be bad if one of his bags broke. Kurata frowned at the usage of high beams in the residential area, but he paid it no mind and continued walking.

The dazzling headlights fatally slowed his reaction. The car came straight at him with no sign of stopping. By the time he realised, it was too late for him to avoid it.

“Hey, wait...”

The roar of the engine reverberated in his ears, and his vision was drowned out by the lights. He felt a chill down his back.

He collided with the car while hugging his bags. At the moment of impact, he heard his body make a frightening sound. As his body flew through the air, before he lost consciousness because of the pain, all sorts of emotions flashed through his mind. But he did not see his life flash before his eyes, or curse his luck in being a victim in this accident.

Ah, I can't make the models I just bought and the series of models that will be released next month, such a shame...!

In his mind was the passion he had for the models he wouldn't be able to assemble anymore.

◆◆◆

“— This just in.

Around 10pm tonight, a man collided with a car in K city S district. The victim was an office worker residing in the area, Kurata Tsubasa(28). An ambulance was dispatched after a resident made a report, but they failed to resuscitate the victim. According to the police investigation, the suspect was driving under the influence—”

Knights & Magic - Volume 1 - Chapter 1

A place he did not belong to, a different world.

This world had no name, the people had not completely explored it. They thought the continents they lived upon encompassed their whole world, and one such continent in this world was Zetterlund.

The Zetterlund Continent was split into an eastern and western region by the Aubigne mountain range. Divided by the mountain range, each region contained its own unique environment. The west was ruled by several countries controlled by humans, known collectively as the Western Union. To the east was the Bocuse sea of trees ruled by powerful Demonic creatures — the nest of Demonic Beasts.

However, the eastern region of Zetterlund was not totally devoid of all humans. There existed a solitary human nation, known as the kingdom of Fremmevira. Because this country was on the border of the sea of trees, it was also the first line of defence in the war against the Demon beasts. To counter the roaming Demon beasts, the nation raised an army of knights and has maintained it to this day. They were proud of their role as the shield of humanity and the Western Union became known as the ‘Nation of Knights’.

In the year C.E. 1268, the story with this continent as its background began.

At the base of the mountain Aubigne, which reached up to the clouds, was the Capital of Fremmevira, Känkänen. If you travelled east for half a day on carriage, you would then reach a large town. This town was unique because more than half of its space was taken up by a single facility. It was a fortified building made with bricks and stones, yet it didn’t feel intimidating and was not meant for military use. This building was an educational institute for children known as ‘Laihiala Pilot Academy’.

Knights defend the people against Demon beast attacks. As part of the glorious nation of knights, they were popular in Fremmevira, and it was a highly respected occupation. As a country prone to attacks due to its geographic location, they needed the support of a large army. Training knights was then made a priority for the nation, leading to the expansion of the educational organization for knights, Laihiala pilot academy.

A low thud reverberated within the building crafted of stone masonry.

This place had a wide stone floor, surrounded by stone walls and seats. This oval shaped training ground was situated in a corner of the academy.

In the centre of the ground were two knights facing off with their swords. They were both heavily armoured, one with a sword and shield, the other wielding a 2-handed sword. The training ground was used for mock battles. The two knights were going through all sorts of drills, and the swords they were using were blunt to avoid injuries.

The two knights took the exercises seriously, even though it was only practice. They pointed their swords at each other, carefully gauging the distance of their opponent. A gust of wind blew sand into the air. The powerful stare down ended, and both of them launched their attacks simultaneously, closing the gap between them in an instant. They moved into combat range so nimbly that it was unbelievable to think that they were in full battle armour.

But there was something off about this scene, the ground was shaking with each of the fighter's step, emitting a low and heavy thud into the air. Normal humans shouldn't make such heavy sounds with their footsteps, even if they are fully armoured.

The answer lies with their surroundings.

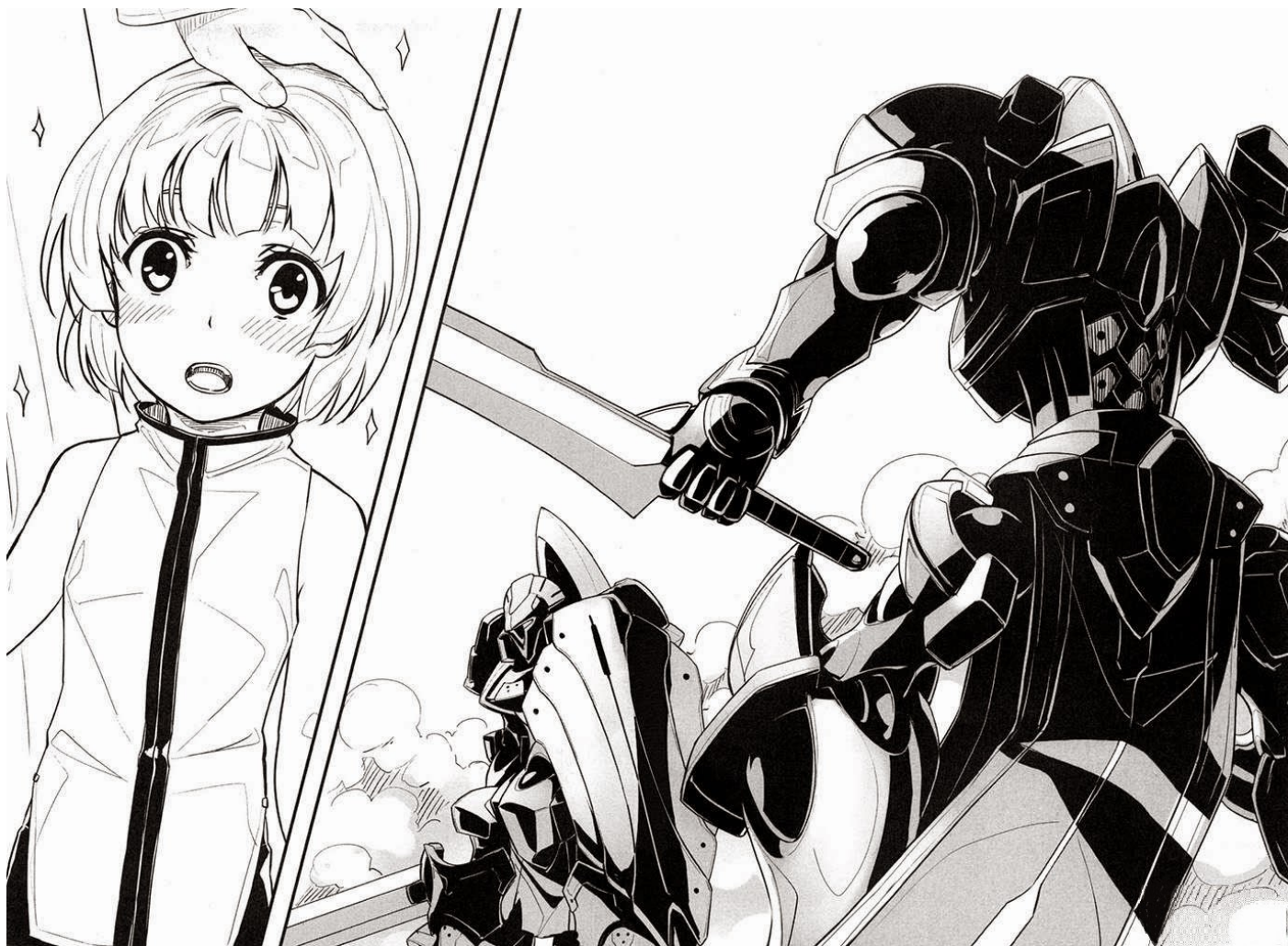
There were people in the audience seats watching the knights' duel, but their figures were much smaller than the knights. No, the opposite was true; it was the knights that were too big. If the size of the knights and the size of the audience were compared side by side, the knights would be at least 6 times larger. It was only natural for them to be heavy, and it was not an exaggeration to call them giants.

These giant knights were not human. They were actually Silhouette Knights, around 10 metres in height with metallic frames known as 'Inner Skeletons' and 'crystal tissues' acting as its muscles. Fuelled by mana, it was a hybrid robot spawned by magic and machinery, a giant knight. They were weapons made to fight against the magic beasts, the strongest fighting unit known to mankind.

A short distance away from the battling Silhouette Knights, several figures were watching the fight, one of them had an exceptionally sharp gaze.

He was one of the battle instructors. In other words, his duty was to instruct the pilots battling with the Silhouette Knights in order to train them to protect citizens from the demon beasts. He took in every single movement of the trainees, giving off a serious air.

"It's... Robots..."



A cute voice came behind him. The man turned and saw a beautiful lady walking towards him with a child in her arms. The lady had smooth, flowing silver hair with a hint of purple that reached her waist. Her hair swayed in the wind as she walked, leaving a bright silver trail behind her. She had gentle blue eyes, pale white skin, and looked very young, between the ages of 15 to 20. Despite her young appearance, she was already married and had a child.

The demonic instructor, whose face was feared by all, showed a rare smile. People who knew him might have been shocked, but it would not be surprising if you were in the warm presence of the lady.

“Tina, what brings you here? It’s really rare to see you visiting the academy.”

“I just wanted to let Eru see his father’s workplace, so I made a detour from our usual stroll.”

“I see. Eru, what do you think of dad’s job?”

The man asked the child held by his wife, but was completely ignored. The child kept waving his short limbs about, staring intently at the Silhouette Knights sparring on the training ground.

“Eh, he doesn’t seem to be listening...”

The man smiled as he patted his 3 year old son's head. Their son had inherited his mother's adorable features — silver hair with a touch of purple, an oval face exactly like his mother's when she was young, and a pair of bright blue eyes. His sharp gaze showed a hint of his paternal heritage.

“Ara, Eru, you are paying more attention to the Silhouette Knights than your own father, just like a boy. Do you really like the Silhouette Knights so much?”

“I heard that a lot of kids dream of being a knight, Eru seems to think so too.”

Both parents smiled as they watched Eru display his curiosity for this boyish interest. He was so cute. The little boy watched the scene excitedly while waving his arms and legs, unfazed with being the centre of attention. He focused on the training ground without blinking, displaying his exceptional concentration. The man rubbed his son's soft hair for a while but gave up after getting no reaction.

“You really like it, huh. How is it, Eru? Those are Silhouette Knights, gigantic warriors that defend our kingdom.”

“Silhouette... Knight...”

The child seemed to acknowledge the words of the man for the first time, repeating his words with a slur unique to toddlers as he fell deep into thought. The man smiled bitterly after seeing his child behave this way, and returned to his post after conversing with his wife for a while. On the training ground, the gigantic knights finished their match and were preparing to leave.

“Right, let's return home. We need to prepare dinner and wait for daddy to return.”

The lady coaxed the child who kept looking back, reluctant to go. They were going home.

“Silhouette Knight...”

The child in her arms watched the gigantic knights on the training ground until they were out of sight.

The child's full name, referred to as Eru, was Ernesti Echevarria. He was the son of Mathias Echevarria, instructor of Laihiala Pilot Academy, borne by his mother Celestina.

It has been three years since his birth. This was the age when a child forms his sense of self, a period when they become playful. But Eru was very sensible. He understood his parents from an early age and was well behaved. Everyone felt that he was a bright kid, but his intelligence came from another source.

Ever since becoming self aware, and developing his own character, he became conscious

of memories he had never experienced before — the memories of his past where he lived in another place. A place called Japan, the civilization of computers, and the name Kurata Tsubasa.

A theory known as reincarnation.

Reincarnation describes the phenomenon that occurs when the spirits of those who have died are reborn into the world over and over again. It is mentioned in Buddhism, and all Japanese would have heard about this theory, whether they believed it or not. Kurata was no exception, but he didn't believe it at that time and never expected to experience it himself. He had even retained the experiences from his previous life, a successful reincarnation.

But including himself, no one truly knew what happened. The only thing he was sure of was, that he was Ernesti in this world and Kurata Tsubasa in his previous world. That's why, compared to children around his age, he had an 'experienced' mind, and a calm and matured analytical ability.

Because of his mother's whim, he visited his father's workplace. The impact of this visit inspired him to devote his second chance at life to this.

When the sun started to set in the west, a lady and a child walked along the streets of Laihiala academy.

The boy kept asking about the gigantic knights that he had seen, and his mother answered him gently and patiently. Looking at her excited son, his mother cheerfully replied:

"You really like Silhouette Knights, don't you? Does Eru want to be a knight in the future?"

"Knight... Okay! I want to be a knight!"

"Ara, such a dependable child. Let's ask daddy to teach you when you get a little older alright?"

"Okay!"

No one knew what would happen because of this dimension travel. But he was certain that his second life as Ernesti Echevalier was developing beyond his control.

The Echevarria residence was situated near Laihiala academy.

Apart from this family, the people in this nation awaken early. As the sun was rising in the east, the young mother, Celestina, got up to prepare breakfast. When she was done, the

whole family ate together as usual.

The only child of the family, Ernesti, awoke the latest.

“Silhouette Knight!”

Eru seemed to have dreamt of something, as he kicked off his blanket and leapt up from his bed. He was unaware of his mother laughing because of his shout. Eru looked around him, realising he was in the bedroom, he climbed back into bed.

He was too excited last night and couldn't sleep. Instead, he laid in bed daydreaming, with a smile on his face.

Those are robots, and humanoid in shape, gigantic humanoid robots...!

Ernesti — or rather the Japanese Kurata Tsubasa shed a tear of joy in his heart for this unexpected blessing, and couldn't stop smiling. Retaining the memories of Kurata Tsubasa means he inherited similar interests and hobbies from his previous life. In Eru's previous life, he was Kurata Tsubasa, a heavily addicted robot nerd.

As a working adult, he spent almost all of his income on his hobby, browsing modelling magazines and games, even searching for visual works at times. He put double the effort into his hobby compared to others, and it wouldn't be wrong to say that he was obsessed. But despite his obsession, he was still an ordinary man. He didn't have the passion to join the self-defence force just for the chance to operate a tank. But the situation was different in this life. That's right, gigantic humanoid robots — Silhouette Knights actually existed here.

When he 'awakened', he was disappointed to find himself in a world with no models or computers. But he was grateful from the bottom of his heart for this miracle, be it by chance or by the will of a mysterious force, allowing him to reincarnate in this world, his disappointment changed when he had discovered Silhouette Knights. This was not a joke, gigantic humanoid weapons 10 metres in height actually existed. For a robot nerd like him, seeing the Silhouette Knights had enough impact to completely change his life. In other words, he believed the reason that he came to this world was to pilot these gigantic robots. He had no basis for it, but he still strongly believed this.

He had the resolve, but his tiny body lost to his sleepiness, and he napped a bit more before breakfast was ready.

It was almost noon, Celestina and Eru were in Mathias's study room.

The study was filled with simple, but practical wooden furniture that was kept clean and tidy. Mathias was primarily a sword instructor, but he was involved in other fields as well. The shelves in the study room were filled with all sorts of literature, including picture

books for children.

Tina sat on the couch in the room, resting the tiny Eru on her lap, reading the picture book slowly to him. She spoke clearly and calmly. Eru, who was enjoying this yesterday, listened for some time before he started to fidget. He called out to his mother:

“Mum, mum.”

“What is it, Eru? You don’t like this book?”

Tina tilted her head, but Eru’s next words dispelled her confusion.

“I like books... But, I want to know more about Silhouette Knights!”

Tina set the book aside and studied Eru’s expression. Looking at his bright eyes filled with curiosity and joy, she couldn’t turn him down.

“Ara ara, I see. Although it is still early for you, Eru, if you want to pilot the Silhouette Knights, you have to first become a knight.”

“Knight... how do I become a knight?”

Eru had a fixed goal in mind, but he was still a 3 year old toddler body-wise. Even with the intellect of a grown man, his actions were still restricted, including the most crucial part, information gathering. How does a toddler, with limited access to resources, obtain information? He has to rely on his parents.

“Let’s see, you need to read many books and practice swordsmanship. Right, let your daddy teach you about swords. Your father teaches swordsmanship at the academy anyway. How about reading your favourite book, where Silhouette Knights make an appearance okay?”

“Okay!”

Eru finally focused back on the book. Tina rubbed his head, took out a book related to Silhouette Knights, and read it to him slowly. Eru listened to the story that was simple enough for a child to understand excitedly.

Eru imagined himself piloting the gigantic knight, standing before humongous demon beasts in order to protect those in danger. He reforged his mind once again. He wanted to pilot a Silhouette Knight no matter what, and the sooner the better. To achieve this, he needed to use his mature mindset to his advantage and achieve all he could with his power. He prepared a schedule for the future in his mind, but for now, he listened quietly to the story.

“Dad, do you have a minute?”

Mathias Echevarria, who was resting in the study, heard the sound from behind him. He turned and saw his son, Ernesti Echevarria run towards him. Eru, who was now 5 years old, had a bowl cut, with his hair just above the eyebrows. He had bright silvery purple hair just like his mother; the resemblance to her cute appearance remained the same. Even the strict Mathias, with his merciless face smiled often in front of Eru.

“Oh, I have time. What is it, Eru?”

“I want to ask you a favour, dad.”

Eru was young, but he spoke clearly. His slightly slurred speech when he was three, was now smooth at the age of 5. This child had always been polite to everyone since he was young. As his speech grew clearer, this became more obvious. But this didn't feel weird, and actually complemented his cute and small appearance. Mathias smiled happily, as he looked at Eru's pleading face. His 'doting' towards his son had been getting worse over time.

“Dad, I want to be a knight, please teach me swordsmanship.”

It's finally the time. Mathias was troubled, but he didn't show it on his face. He knew his son had been keen on being a knight ever since he was really young, and there was no problem with his goal. If he had the motivation, that would be great. But Eru was only 5 years old, so it was still too early to teach him swordsmanship. If they rush it and start before Eru's body develops, it would be detrimental to him. Also, Eru looked more similar to his wife with every passing year, and was smaller in stature than children his age. To be honest, Mathias wondered if his son could even handle a sword.

But Mathias still faced his son firmly. Since Eru was showing his resolve, he couldn't ignore this as an instructor or as a father. Mathias advised his son not to rush, and start by building up his physical strength first. He also informed him that aside from swordsmanship, knowledge in magic would also help him in his quest to become a knight, encouraging him to study it.

“Magic... I understand dad, I will seek your advice on swordsmanship in the future.

Looking at the unwavering face of his son, Mathias nodded, promising to teach him swordsmanship one day.

“.. That's what happened mum, so please teach me magic!”

After making the promise with Mathias, Eru immediately went to Tina and asked her. Why was he asking his mother? Because Tina's father, who was Eru's grandfather, was the current dean of Laihiala Pilot Academy — Lauri Echevarria. Tina accepted gladly,

gathering the necessary teaching materials within her means.

— Magic.

It goes without saying that in Eru's previous life — back on earth, magic did not exist. It only appeared in stories and fairy tales. Most people only heard about magic when playing role playing games, like dungeons and dragons. But this powerful force existed in this world, and knights used magic often as support when fighting.

Under the guidance of his mother, who was doubling as a teacher, Eru read textbooks related to magic.

From the moment Eru decided to pilot a Silhouette Knight, Eru had started taking action. What he had been doing was the very basics, simply learning to read. Learning to read at the age of 3 was a very early start. Even the privileged class of this country — the aristocrats — didn't start so early. Because of this, Eru could handle materials that were quite advanced.

It was natural for kids to detest studying, but Eru was not a normal child. All of his effort was for the goal of becoming a knight. When he thought about piloting a Silhouette Knight, studying was no hassle in comparison to the reward. He could even read through textbooks from cover to cover. Because the contents were so stiff, it was better to treat it like a game, and enjoy it instead of thinking of it as studying. With the fast learning pace unique only to children, Eru learned the contents at an incredible pace.



Tina was not a teacher by profession, but she was managing it smoothly. She was the daughter of a school dean and the wife of an instructor after all. She satisfied the wishes of Eru, teaching him magic patiently.

— In simple terms, magic in this world refers to the skill of manipulating mana to perform physical phenomenon.

All living things in this world has the ability to convert the ‘ether’ in the air into mana, and store a certain amount of it within their body.

“Mana is something like fuel, magic will be used in accordance to the content of the magic script, to do things in the physical world through a catalyst.”

Tina explained to Eru who was sitting down obediently.

“There are two types of living beings in this world; they are divided into those who can use magic independently, and those who can’t. The difference lies in the existence of a catalyst within their body. For beings that can use magic, they have a crystal within their body that acts as a catalyst. For example, the strongest creatures known as dragons possess a catalyst, and their dragon breath is created using this catalyst.”

“Humans don’t have a catalyst inside us, so we are a race that can’t use magic.”

Since humans didn’t have a crystal catalyst, they couldn’t use magic. Based on the laws of this world, this was a natural and undeniable fact. But people had learned of a way to use magic. This was the result of using their weapon called wisdom. As living beings of this world, humans could make use of mana and external catalysts to develop scripts gradually to use magic, successfully overcoming their weakness.

With this breakthrough, humans, who were always the weakest in this world, developed gigantic magic-powered weapons after years of research - the Silhouette Knights. This made the humans one of the most powerful races.

“Mum, since the Silhouette Knights are so powerful, and we have such a huge army of knights, we can build a bigger country right?”

“Maybe it can be done, but it is difficult.”

Silhouette Knights may be powerful weapons, but they were tactical weapons that required large amounts of resources to build and maintain. It was practically impossible to prepare a force capable of dominating the land. Humanity used the Aubigne mountain range as the border to maintain peace on the western side of the continent. Fremmevira

remained behind it as a barrier to protect their foothold in the east. The stalemate had been going on for centuries.

“I will leave the details for history class. You will learn about it in more detail when you start school.”

Tina was talking about practical applications of magic. As mentioned before, magic had to be conjured through scripts, and the construction and usage of scripts was performed by a virtual organ in the brain known as Magius circuit. In this world, all beings that are self-aware has the potential to use it.

“And Eru, scripts are sigils that perform specific phenomenon. First, are the ‘Architect’ sigils that perform basic phenomena, followed by the ‘Control’ sigils that coordinate and use Architect sigils.”

By combining Architect sigils and Control sigils, the picture created was something similar to magic summoning circles on earth.

For beginners in magic, the part they will have trouble with is the construction of the script. Most people can manipulate Architect sigils immediately, but using powerful spells by using more complex scripts requires a great amount of practice. As humans can’t use magic naturally, creating high level magic requires the accumulation of experience. Apart from perseverance, it also requires natural talent.

Architect sigils that determine the phenomenon and the control sigils that maximise its effects. Combining both of them by using a set of fixed laws... Right, I have seen this before, this is just like...

Eru’s occupation in his past life — programmer, helped him understand this part. In simple terms, the sigils and their interactions in the form of a script followed similar logic in programming code. The operation of the script by the magius circuit was similar to a virtual computer. Since the magius circuit was built within the brain, activating it didn’t take time, performing better than computers in his previous life.

After Eru grasped the logic behind it, he ‘extracted’ the architect sigil and control sigil from the textbook and started using his magius circuit — which was within the human brain — to start coding. With such a large amount of codes, even a veteran programmer wouldn’t be able to organise it within their head; they would need the help of software editors. To counter this, Eru used the magius circuit domain as a software editor to plan and compile the scripts.

Because he was a beginner, he had no idea how much magic the people in this world could use. He didn’t consider his ability to easily build and control the complicated programming language to be special.

Eru held a tiny wooden wand and focused with his eyes closed.

A small crystal was fixed onto the tip of the wand. That was the crystal catalyst, a miraculous item which allowed humans to use magic. For humans using magic, they prefer to wield wands with the crystal catalyst affixed onto the tip. The wand in Eru's hand made a gentle 'Pashu' sound, and a line of fire shot out, leaving a scorched mark in the middle of the target board. He just activated the fire architect sigil with beginner magic — 'Fire torch'.

"Wow Eru, that's great. Although it is just the architect sigil, I never imagined that you would be able to use magic so quickly."

"But mum, the textbook says that this is the basics of the basics, anyone can use it immediately."

"It is true that anyone can activate it, but to hit the target so accurately requires practice. Eru has talent for magic."

No matter how good Eru was in programming, it was useless if he only studied the theory without putting it into practice. A simple target board in the backyard and Tina accompanied Eru for practical training. They practiced all types of architect sigils one by one, allowing Eru to get used to the feeling of using magic. After casting spells repeatedly, Eru started to feel weird... it felt like energy was gradually draining from his body. It was like the fatigue you feel after exercising, but different at the same time. This unique experience confused him, but this was the natural result of expending mana. He panted heavily and breathed in the ether from the air around him, attempting to replenish his mana.

... I didn't know it was this tiring. If I used advanced spells, I would have probably fainted because of the shortness of breath.

Tina who had been supervising him, walked over with a gentle smile and rubbed his head.

"This is how it feels when you expend mana. If you don't experience it now, it will be troublesome in the future."

"... I can't catch my breath, it feels painful. My mana is empty after using just a little magic, so depressing."

"Don't be discouraged. You are still young, lacking mana is normal."

"Will I have more mana when I grow up?"

"Hmm — Let me think. It's a bit different, but just think of it as something like stamina. The growth of mana is not solely dependent on your physical growth. It will also get stronger as you train your psyche."

“I understand. Mum, since that’s the case, I will be doing special training to increase my mana pool!”

Tina gave a bitter smile, rubbing the head of the spirited Eru.

“Ara, what a hardworking child. Don’t be too impatient, going too fast might be bad too.”

Eru reflected upon this and felt that he was being too rash. Tina was right, rushing wouldn’t be good for him, and he didn’t want his mother, who was accompanying him to worry.

“Yes, mum. I will take it slow and steady.”

Eru promised his mother with a straight face. Tina nodded and hugged him tightly.

Eru started his special training the following day.

With the promise with Tina and the future in mind, he needed to improve his physical and magical abilities steadily. Constructing scripts was Eru’s strength. He would be able to find a way to advance if he made use of his previous life’s knowledge. The rest would depend on the mana he needed to use the magic. He persisted in his routine of jogging, physical exercise, depleting his mana, and recovering it. As he was going through his fundamental training, he found an interesting magic in the textbook.

He was looking up physical boost spells. Physical boost means literally strengthening the capabilities of your body, including strength, stamina, and speed. Eru’s plan was to incorporate this spell in his physical exercise, training both mind and body at the same time for efficiency.

The spell physical boost was a high spell, a spell that was difficult to use. The effects of the magic were dependent on the script. The simpler the structure, the closer it would be to the architect sigil, and conversely, the easier it would be to control; the more targets there are, the more complex and difficult it would become.

The high level complex spell physical boost had the ability of enhancing ‘every muscle fibre’, strengthening ‘all of the bones’ to absorb the impact, and the improvement of the durability of the skin. There was a need to control the target of the spell, which changes rapidly with every movement. To use these effects, the script needed to be activated constantly. This was why the boost spell was on a higher level than big, flashy spells, which did not require constant upkeep to maintain.

Normally, Eru would have given up at this stage and would have chosen a more practical spell. But he knew how to solve the problem because of his unique skills — programming concept. He had experience in designing and coding software to handle multiple variables. That’s why he skipped the beginner magic phase and jumped straight into the ‘modified

magic' phase. Reviewing the structure of the physical boost script, Eru compressed the structure to minimise the number of variables, creating subscripts that would automatically extract the status of the body. After compiling it, he just needed to design the user interface to make it easier to control, so as to lessen the burden.

Complicated projects like the improvement of scripts was not something that could be done easily by anyone. Eru, however, was not aware of this, completing the improvement shortly, and the patch was a big enhancement. But even so, it was still difficult to control magic that strained the mind heavily. But with his extraordinary processing ability, it was not much. No one realised that a historical revolution had occurred, but for Eru, this was just a small step in his journey.

Everything was ready. Eru held a wand in his hand, activated the improved physical boost spell, and began his daily training regime excitedly. But his high spirited trip ended in tragedy, he didn't even have time to feel moved by his enhanced physical attributes before collapsing a few hundred metres away because of mana depletion.

As expected of an advanced spell, the controls were complicated and the mana cost was tremendous. Eru felt down because of this basic mistake and returned to his normal training regime for quite a while.

Even with the efforts he put in, he still needed 3 years before he could activate his physical boost magic for a sustainable amount of time. Eru was fuelled by his passion, moving towards his goal day by day.

Knights & Magic - Volume 1 - Chapter 2

Laihiala Pilot Academy had a dormitory, several restaurants, and all sorts of shops. Various Silhouette Knight repair shops were gathered there as well, including lodging for related personnel, forming a large college city. Because Laihiala Pilot Academy was the top academic facility in the nation, the size of the city was not far off from the capital itself. The city adopted its name from the academy and was known as 'Laihiala Academy City', Ernesti resided in such a place.

The sun set beyond the walls that surrounded the city, and night engulfed the academy city. Apart from a selected few, most of the shops had closed for the day, and only a handful of people were still wandering the streets. The whole city fell into a peaceful silence. A petite figure ran along a path formed by the rooftops of the buildings. The figure was dressed in black that was difficult to see in the dark, moving like the wind along the roof.

And of course, that was the 8 year old Ernesti Echevarria. With the passage of time, his training had evolved from simple jogging into a round trip along the roofs of the buildings in the city. According to Eru, the wide field of vision and the undulating height of the buildings was perfect for training.

He learned from his failure in using the physical boost spell in the past, and further improved it, changing it into a spell with low mana cost, emphasizing just the legs for running. He had become accustomed to it, even strenuous movement wouldn't affect the script. His enhanced legs enabled him to sprint at a very fast pace.

As he ran, Eru came to the edge of a line of connected buildings; the edge was akin to a cliff with the road looming below. He took a deep breath, increasing his mana output. With the fierce reaction, he accelerated like an arrow fired from a bow, closing the gap to the edge in an instant. The moment he took his last step and leapt into the air, he activated another spell — by compressing the air, in front of him, he created a dense air bullet. This was originally the basic wind magic, air bullet. Eru exploded the air bullet behind him, using the burst of energy from the release to push him forward.

The instantaneous acceleration threw Eru's body into the air, forming a beautiful arch in the sky. He activated his body strengthening magic in mid-air and cast another spell just before he landed. Another air bullet spell — but the area of compressed air was much larger. He didn't fire off the air bullet like before. Instead, he used it as a cushion, landing nicely on the other roof. Eru rolled to reduce the impact, running off with the same speed as before the jump.

The year was C.E. 1273.

It has been 3 years since Eru started his magic training. He practiced daily without rest, accumulating a large amount of mana within his petite body. Normally, a child wouldn't train so intensively in magic at such a young age, so it was not surprising for Eru to have grown so strong. The regimen also trained his physical attributes, which increased dramatically, but it was a pity he couldn't use full body strengthening spells for an extended amount of time. That's why he invented low mana cost spells targeted at specific parts of the body, only using his full strength when necessary. He has also found a way to use other spells while moving at high speeds. This training allowed Eru's outstanding processing ability to improve, increasing his mana pool while decreasing the mana expended.

There was a reason why Eru focused his magic on movement. He didn't spend all of his time on training, making time to play with other kids his age, so his parents wouldn't worry. Despite his reasons, he couldn't deny that playing like a kid again was fun. Eru slowly realized that his body was smaller than others, but he was not too bothered about it. If his growth remained stagnant, however, Eru's lack of weight might become his weakness.

Naturally, Eru plans to continue training his magic, refusing to fail because of his lack of abilities. Even so, his body being so light meant he has to place more consideration in regard to attack power. This was the reason he chose to strengthen his mobility. The speed would both disrupt enemies and increase attack power.

That's right, just like Ushi Wakamaru overcoming strength with skills, the Japanese way. Eh, although I didn't have much choice anyway.

Eru thought about these trivial things as he ran in the dim street during the evening. A normal training route, the daily jogging routine, but something unexpected happened.

"Eh? Someone is coming." A girly voice came from above. A stern voice followed: "Who are you?"

"...Is someone there?" The questions from both parties overlapped each other. Eru has never run into anyone during his rooftop training before, this was the first time he did.

They remained silent for quite a while. They had met someone at a place that was normally devoid of people, so it was understandable to be cautious. One of them was dressed in black with his hood up, a suspicious outfit.

Eru observed the other party. The weak starlight made visibility low, but he could vaguely make out that they were a boy and girl pair about his age. Eru was shorter than average, while the two of them were relatively tall and thin. At a glance, they didn't look younger than Eru, but not much older either.

He couldn't make any headway with this silence, so Eru introduced himself.

"Evening, I am Ernesti, in the middle of a stroll. And you are?"

The two who were wary of this youth in black were stunned by the sudden introduction. Eru couldn't make out the delicate changes in their facial expression, but from the reflection of the moonlight, he knew the young boy squinted eyes.

"I am Archid, this is my younger sister..."

"Adeltrud... Eh, we were watching the stars... that's right."

Eru looked at the ceiling window behind them; the couple probably came out from there. The sudden encounter surprised them, but it was simply a coincidence. Eru decided to continue jogging.

"I see, sorry to disturb you. I will take my leave..."

"Wa... wait, don't go yet. A stroll, you say? On the roof top wearing that?"

"Don't you think that is strange?"

"Hm, that's true."

Eru could tell they were taken aback from their tone. Even Eru would have been suspicious if he was in their shoes.

"I said it was a stroll, but it is more like special training. That's why, I chose a place where it is difficult to run."

"Eh... Do you really need to run on the roof? That's weird."

A simple matter to Eru, but it was unthinkable strange to them. They looked at each other with scepticism faces and asked while tilting their heads.

"...Hmmm, forget it. That means we are interrupting your training."

"Please don't mind me. Well, I should be..."

"Hey, hey, wait! You said this is special training, so you run around this place every day?"

Adeltrud stopped Eru, who was ready to go. Eru stumbled a bit, and replied "Yes", and took off again. The two of them followed Eru with their eyes, as he disappeared into the shadows... His extraordinary speed surprised them, as they watched Eru accelerate and leap off the edge of the roof. The large arc of his jump stunned them yet again.

“... Amazing, really amazing! What is that? That looks fun!”

“Wah, he is really running! Incredible, he flew off from the edge of the roof!?”

Archid and Adeltrud were excited after Eru left. They were stargazing out on the roof because of some unhappy events, and had an amazing encounter. Their lives changed drastically because of this meeting.

Eru, Archid, and Adeltrud met again the very next day, at the same place. Unlike the encounter before, the two of them seemed to be waiting for Eru. Eru gave up any thoughts of trying to avoid them and greeted:

“Evening. Watching the stars again?”

“Yo. Nope, we are here to see you.”

“Yep...”

The pair smiled happily, visible even under the faint starlight. Eru wasn't sure of their intentions, but decided to go along with them. He could just run away if things go awry, and pick another running route in the future.

“Erm, do you have to cover your head?”

Archid pointed out. Eru thought it was rude too, so he removed his hood and sat on the roof like they did. “What is this about?” Eru pressed them. He noticed that the two of them stiffened with awkward expressions.

“Eh, your names are Archid and Adeltrud, right? What is it? Why the weird reaction?”

“Eh? Oh, nothing. You... you are a girl!?”

“You moved so fast, I thought you were a boy...”

Eru, whose image takes after his mother, had grown even more adorable with age and was now a ‘pretty girl’. The silvery, purple hair that reached just over his chin was cut to shoulder length, swaying in the wind. The dim moonlight failed to hide his face. In fact, the faint light on his smooth skin gave his face a magical air. His pretty face didn't match the amazing movements they saw the day before, confusing the pair. Eru looked at the two children with slanted eyes and said:

“No, I look like my mother, but I really am a boy.”

“... No, there is a limit to how much you take after your mother. Are you really a boy?”

“It’s true; I have nothing to gain from a lie like this.”

“Oh...How... how cute, Ernesti...”

Adeltrud drew closer with her hands for some reason, and Eru stepped back when he sensed the danger. Archid grabbed Adeltrud’s collar and pulled her back immediately.

“Eh... Ah, my name is hard to articulate, just call me Eru.”

“Ah, you can call me Chid.”

“I will address you as Eru, then! I am Ady!”

「俺はアーキッド。」

『キッド』な。

で、そつちが妹の」

「アデルトルート。」

『アデイ』って呼んで」



After the round of introductions, Eru was wary of Ady, who looked ready to pounce on him as he said:

“And, so? What did you want to talk about?”

“Right, after you left yesterday, didn’t you jump really high from the roof? How did you do that?”

“Ah, that...”

“Also, please teach us the technique!”

Where did their wariness from yesterday go? Chid was chatting with him like they were old friends. Eru didn’t understand why Chid was so excited.

“I can show you, but it will take a long time okay?”

“No worries. If we train with you, we can fly like you one day, right?”

“But you might be stuck at a bottleneck before that happens too...”

Eru warned and started to explain his training in simple terms... the content about magic. Chid and Ady were quite clever, picking up the difficult content at a good pace. Because they understood the content, they frowned at the task ahead.

“Isn’t that grueling!”

“Eru is so amazing...”

“Didn’t I tell you that at the very beginning?”

The stunned duo groaned, then lifted their heads as if they had just thought of something.

“By the way, why is your magic so powerful?”

“... That is because of compatibility, and I have been training for some years.”

“Some years... How old are you?”

“Eight.”

“Eh!? That’s the same as us!?”

Ady was impressed. Compared to the explanation earlier, this was more stunning. Chid

and Ady seemed to be twins, both of them were eight years old just like Eru. Chid was in high spirits after hearing this, dismissing all of his worries. He had a face that said 'alright, we have to do this' and was fired up. Eru warned Chid who was rearing to go:

“Physical boost is a high spell; you can’t use it without starting from the basics.”

“Then just teach us magic.”

“...Hmm?”

“You are strong, right? You know a lot of advanced spells!”

“You might be cute, but you are also dependable!”

Eru’s face began to cramp. This development was beyond his expectations and had nothing to do with cuteness. Their request was troubling; he wanted to escape if it was at all possible. But when he saw Chid and Ady talking enthusiastically about the training regimen, his conscience could not allow him to ignore them.

“Ah... This.... Eh, I understand. I will... teach both of you magic...”

“Great, I knew you were a bro!”

“Wonderful, no wonder you are so cute!”

“You are overestimating me, and this has nothing to do with being cute!? Wait, like I said, magic cannot be learned immediately. You have to start from the basics, understand?”

“I know, I know, don’t worry. We will catch up to you in a flash!”

He felt uneasy with Chid, who accepted so readily, but Eru still confirmed the training details with them before they parted ways.

The following day, the twins visited Eru’s home. Not at night, but during the day.

Because they had only met under the moonlight until now, Eru finally saw their beautiful black hair and hazel eyes. The brunette twins reminded Eru of Japan, and he felt a sense of kinship with them. Chid’s messy hair was short, while Ady’s slightly wavy hair reached her shoulders. They really were twins, having similar physiques and strong eyes.

“Welcome to my humble abode, please come in.”

Eru gave up resisting and ushered them in. The Echevarria residence was slightly bigger than their neighbours’ because of their relations with both the dean and an instructor at Laihiala Pilot School. Chid and Ady looked around curiously as they followed Eru.

Eru's mother, Celestina, welcomed them warmly. Her son, who seldom brought friends home, had two guests with him at the same time. She was a great cook, and showed off her prowess, making her guests feel at home with her snacks and beverages. Ady was really delighted, she hit it off well with Tina and was about to follow her into the kitchen to make snacks, but was dragged off forcefully by Chid.

After the disruption, they went into Eru's room to learn basic magic. Eru's room was very tidy. There were only a table, a bed, and several shelves along the wall. The shelves had textbooks related to magic, along with some storybooks for display. For preschool children, this room was too practical. The twins (especially Ady) were planning to snoop around the room, but were stopped by Eru.

After this episode, the magic lesson finally began. Eru used the magic textbook he liked the most as the teaching material, starting from the fundamentals. He thought that the pair were too confident and believed that because they were 8 years old, they would grow tired of it and give up immediately. But Chid and Ady were surprisingly passionate about their studies. When they started their architect sigil practical session, they displayed admirable control, hitting the bull's eye after a few attempts.

Eru remembered their conversation yesterday. Did they understand the explanation about magic immediately? That means the twins are excellent. Eru reflected on underestimating them, as he gave feedback to the duo that collapsed after depleting their mana.

"What you are feeling is mana depletion because your mana pool is too small. You should start by building up your mana capacity through training."

"Huff, huff, this is tiring. So... How do we do this special training?"

"Deplete your mana every day. Your mana pool will grow faster than if you were doing nothing. And it will be best to do some exercise, you can train your body and magic at the same time, it's more efficient that way."

"...Oh, that's why you were jogging on the roof tops?"

"Yes. I told you it's not simple."

"That's right, but I still want to do it! I just need to keep this up every day! Isn't that 'simple'?"

Eru was surprised. He turned around to see Ady, who had caught her breath with both hands on her hips, looking fearless. Her eyes were filled with determination and confidence, and a hint of a smile showed on her face. He looked at Ady, thinking nonchalantly, She is tall and will become a beauty in the future, but she is hard to handle.

"... I see, please work on your architect sigils for now. You will be able to do special training with me after your mana pool grows."

“I don’t know when we will catch up to you... But it will definitely be sooner than you think!”

“Of course! Just watch us; we will reach your standards in no time!”

Eru’s impression of his first ‘good friends’ was improving gradually.

They are tougher than I thought. I’ve made some pretty interesting friends.

And so, Eru’s training now included the twins, Archid Olter and Adeltrud Olter. His life had gotten livelier.

Eru was not just learning magic. When he had spare time from his magical and physical training, he was also learning swordsmanship as promised from his father, Mathias. This was the standard swordsmanship from the curriculum of Laihiala Pilot Academy. Chid and Ady also joined in.

Of the three, Chid was the most talented in the sword. His build was great for his age, which allowed him to surpass Eru in no time. His stance was proper and would never lose to anyone in a simulation battle.

They practiced the sword along with their magic. Compared to other children their age, the trio was incredibly busy. Eru did the necessary training in order to achieve his goal. He had gotten used to it after such a long time, so he didn’t find it intolerable. He felt that he did not push himself hard enough in his previous life, which motivated him to strive harder. Eru realized the biggest motivation for humans manifests from their desire.

But what about Chid and Ady? They harbour the same passion as Eru, living each day to the fullest. Eru’s training already surpassed the normal standards; there was no need to burden normal children with this. If they were aiming to be a knight, there was no need to work so hard. But they never complained about it.

‘What motivates the twins?’ Eru couldn’t think of any reason for them to work so hard.

Even with their busy schedule, they didn’t only train. They made time to spend with their parents or play with other children around their age. With the largest academy in the nation, the children had plenty of playmates.

The kingdom of Fremmevira had a problem unique to it, which was the existence of the Demon beasts. The situation here was different from the region west of mount Aubigne, the kingdom of Fremmevira shared a border with the Bocuse forest ruled by the Demon beasts. Demon beasts often attack, threatening the lives and property of citizens causing the people to live in fear. Hence, the cities of Fremmevira has strong walls erected around

them, protecting the towns and citizens.

— Everyone in Fremmevira agreed to the construction of the walls, but the playful children found life within the walls to be dull and stifling. To expend their energy, they treated the entire city as their playground, playing around noisily. The sound of the children's laughter could be heard on the streets every day.

It was no different today, a group of kids dashed along the pavement. But on closer inspection, a child had fallen far behind.

“What are you doing... slow tortoise...”

When he heard the jeers of the children, the kid who had fallen behind stopped, panting, and waved his arms while protesting:

“Huff, huff.... It... It can't be helped! We dwarves can't run that fast!”

This protesting child was shorter than the rest; he had a strong and stout body along with short legs, and a sturdy albeit slow build.

“Ah... Batson is slow...”

“What did you say? Damn...!”

“Slow Batson is angry! It will hurt if he gets you...! Run away...!”

The child named Batson was red from anger, running along with heavy steps, but he couldn't compensate for his short stride. The children dispersed with laughter every time he drew near, leaving the lonesome Batson behind.

“...Ku, damn...”

He clenched his fists in frustration. He was helpless, but being slow was a racial flaw of the dwarves.

Dwarves... a race originating from the northern mountains.

They lived among treacherous, snowy peaks, residing within caves. As time went by, they started excavating deeper and became skilled miners. While refining and processing the rich minerals in the northern hills, the dwarves became experts at all sorts of mineral resources, advancing their skills in crafting with them. They were renowned as the ‘crafting race’.

Because of their environment, the dwarves had evolved over time, in order to move nimbly in narrow caves. Their short but stout stature was their most prominent, physical trait. They were also covered in muscles, having double the arm strength of normal

humans. They were rugged in appearance; the men had thick long hair, and beards which start growing at the age of ten. By the way, their culture emphasises on how spectacular their beards are and all men take pride in them.

But the isolated dwarves didn't spend their entire history hiding in the north. There were many dwarves who use their skills to set up smith shops all across the land.

The child mentioned just now... Batson Termonen was one of those dwarves. His parents had a smithy in Laihiala Academy City, the reason why he was playing with the local children. The games of children revolved around chasing each other or hide and seek, especially so, for a city surrounded by walls. Batson didn't know how tough it was to live in such an enclosed environment with his short stride. He was also mocked for his appearance by the kids in the neighbourhood.

The children making fun of Batson were long gone. Batson gave up, heading home in disgust.

"Weird. Are you alone? Where are the others?"

The fuming Batson heard someone talking to him and saw the trio when he turned his head. The one in the middle was especially short, like a valley between two mountains. It was the trio Ernesti, Archid, and Adeltrud.

"It's Eru. You guys are probably looking down on me for being slow, too."

The three of them were baffled by Batson's response, but quickly understood the situation. The dwarves might be slow, but they were also very strong. This means Batson would be incredibly strong in a fight. He wouldn't lose against multiple enemies if it came to a dogfight. Batson had an argument with someone, and achieved overwhelming victory in the ensuing fight, which was the reason for the current situation.

As Eru watched Batson walk away, he felt like pulling a prank and laughed mischievously:

"Ah, he was bullied again... Alright, let's go after those guys, everyone."

The twins listened to Eru's suggestion and answered indifferently:

"I'm fine with that, but how? We are fine, but Batson can't keep up."

"Right, that's why we will bring him along. Just treat it as normal training, with Batson as training weights."

"Oh! I get it!"

"Let's go, let's go!"

Chid and Ady understood what Eru was saying, and stood on either side of Batson. They didn't consider how Batson felt and grabbed his arms.

“Eh? Hey... Hey! What are you...”

“Well, let's start our jogging exercise for the day!”

Chid and Ady started moving on Eru's command, ignoring the confused Batson. They treated Batson like cargo and carried him. This technique could only be used after learning 'limited physical boost', allowing them to use strength above their physical limit. Batson was stunned by their amazing speed, unable to resist.

“They must be at the central square! Let's attack!”

“Ora!”

“Yeah!”

“Like I said, what's happening...!?”

Laihiala Academy City was roughly divided between the school campus and the urban zone. In the heart of the urban zone, there was an open space known as the central square to everyone. It was filled with stalls during the day and was the gathering point for all the children.

“Hey, will that guy catch up?”

“There is no way, he's too slow...”

“That's right; it will hurt like hell if you get hit by him!”

“Relax; just run away if he shows up. He is slow, you can get away easily.”

It was the kids who made fun of Batson earlier. The group used some boxes as stools, biting into fruits they bought from a stall. They were gleeful from their successful revenge. Suddenly, they heard a loud scream from far away.

“Ahhhhh... Woah...!”

“Out of the way!”

“Where are you going?! You guys better...!”

They noticed a familiar voice, which surprised them. Wasn't that Batson, who they were just jeering at? The one person they want to avoid? The group searched for the origin of

the voice, and saw Chid and Ady carrying Batson by the arms and approaching fast. They panicked and screamed:

“Woah, what... what are you...!?”

“Ah, found them. Now, Batson... launch!”

Eru pointed out the target, while Chid and Ady threw Batson with a mischievous smile without slowing down. With a running start and a powerful throw, the short but heavy Batson flew through the sky. The group of children had slow reactions, watching Batson as he arced through the air, slack jawed. When they realized they were the landing point, the kids scrambled to get away in a panic.

“Eh! Wah, idiot, don’t come here!”

“Woahhhh, quick... hide...”

But it was too late to run. They were hit directly by Batson’s rock, hard head, the force smashing the boxes into pieces. They fell all over the place under a cloud of dust. It was so chaotic that the masterminds, Eru and his friends, felt guilty as they looked at each other.

“...Did we... go too far?”

“Yeah... Right on target.”

“Hey... I have an idea. I think we should get out of here.”



“You three! Don’t run!”

Batson shrugged off the broken boxes and stood up among the debris. As expected, the first to recover was the tough Batson, the rest of the children were still down. Batson was furious, sprinting towards the trio with a speed beyond any dwarf. The moronic three ran immediately.

“Goodbye, see you later!”

“Shut up, stay where you are!”

By the way, the kids, who were left behind were caught by the adults, and were lectured for breaking the boxes.

Some distance away from the central square and the residential area was a shopping mall. There was a building double the size of the surrounding ones. It emphasized sturdiness more than appearance. This was the smith shop ‘Termonen Workshop’.

Batson chased Eru and the others all over the streets, and finally ended up here. Compared to Eru and company, Batson was on the verge of dying from exhaustion after the chase.

“You... You guys... are too fast...”

“Thanks to our daily training.”

“Huff... how did you train to be so good...”

Eru smiled casually. In terms of stamina, Batson had the edge, but he couldn’t match Eru and his magic.

“Ah... forget it, I don’t care anymore.”

Batson was exhausted and felt that all of this was just silly. He gave up, laid on the ground with his limbs spread out, and finally caught his breath after a long while. He gave a contented smile and laughed softly.

“But it was fun smashing into them head first.”

“Hey, hey, we can do it again if you like.”

“No way.”

After a short while, Batson stood up calmly and pointed to his house.

“Eh, alright. Want to visit my place? I’m thirsty.”

Maybe it’s because they were near the workshop, but they could feel the heat even from outside. Batson’s craftsmen parents were probably working in there.

“Oh, I have never been to your place.”

“Yeah... You will get hit if you disturb them. Don’t be too rowdy.”

The trio entered Batson’s home, and saw his father and a few craftsmen working in silence. Batson’s father had a long beard and a wide body; it was easy to tell that he was a dwarf. His punches were no joke.

Opposite the work tables was the shop front with the finished merchandise on display. Batson explained about each one of them with pride.

“Look, all of these are made by my dad.”

All sorts of metallic equipment could be seen, from swords, lances, shields and armour to woks and pots. As expected of a dwarf craftsman, they were made delicately. Every one of them was a masterpiece made to the perfect size and colour.

“Woah... Your place is selling lots of stuff.”

Eru browsed the merchandise curiously while Ady followed him. Chid grew excited when he saw the weapons, such as swords and lances. Batson was extremely pleased when they praised his father’s work.

“Hey Bat, do you craft things too?”

“Ah... my dad seldom lets me touch metals, but I can do carpentry. I am a dwarf after all; even my dad praises my work!”

After hearing Ady’s whimsical query, Batson pointed to an item at the corner of the shop. There were some simple wooden household items there. They looked plain, but the workmanship was good and durable. Batson’s skill was clear, and the trio was impressed. At this point, something in the corner attracted Eru’s attention.

“Can you make ‘magic staves’?”

“... Magic staves? I can make them if there are enough materials. I made these to earn some pocket money.”

In order to use magic, humans have to use external ‘crystal catalysts’ to convert mana into

physical phenomenon, and a magic staff is the most common example of that. Simply put, the crystal catalyst is attached to the end of the staff for ease of use.

Most staves are made from trees called 'white mist'. Because the wood from these trees are an excellent mana conductor, it is a popular magic ingredient. The plain staff crafted by Batson was also made from that.

"When practising magic, I always felt that..."

Eru's shifted his gaze to the staff on his waist. It was the magic item he had been using since the very beginning. It was shorter than most staves and fits well with his small stature.

"What is it? Something wrong with your staff?"

Eru twirled the short staff wand in his hand and smiled at the confused Batson:

"Don't you think a magic staff is unwieldy?"

Besides Batson, Chid and Ady were puzzled by Eru's comment. They had gotten used to using the staff as a tool to use magic and had no complaints. They didn't understand what he meant.

Eru thought it didn't feel right because of the memories of his previous life. Because he remembered the world where science was king, he felt that this was awkward and primitive. Strictly speaking, magic staves are items used to cast spells. Apart from 'strengthening' magic, human spells are usually 'shot', releasing powerful effects. Eru assumed that a magic staff was a type of 'projectile weapon'.

Eru recalled a scene from his past in Japan... a room filled with models. Among these collections, he owned an airsoft gun, a realistic looking 'Winchester M1894' rifle, which left a deep impression on him. Firearms, especially rifles, resembles magic staves. The correlation made him think that there was a way to implement the shape of the rifle onto a magic staff.

"For example, the knights fight with a sword and staff in each hand..."

Even the knights, whose main weapon were swords, knew the importance of magic. Right handed knights would hold the long sword with their dominant hand and the staff with the other. If a shield was equipped on the left hand, they would normally hold the staff behind the shield.

"I think it is a hassle to hold them separately, that's why I have been thinking about combining them."

"I don't get it... But even if it can be done, how do you want to go about it?"

As he thought, Eru had a stroke of inspiration. Guns and swords... these two simple terms made him think about bayonets on rifles. It was simply attaching a knife to the tip of a gun barrel, using the rifle as a melee weapon. This concept was brought to this alternate world by Eru.

“Yeah, I just thought of an interesting idea.”

Eru smiled gently, making Batson feel a chill run down his back.

Later, Eru returned home, sat in front of a table, and drew the design he had in mind. His focus surprised Chid and Ady who tagged along.

“What is that? What a weird staff.”

That was the first thing Ady said after looking at the finished diagram. ‘Bayonet’... a rifle that fires spells with a blade mounted upon it, the first ‘magic staff’ of its kind. For Ady who had only seen normal magic staves, it was very exotic.

The next day, Eru visited Batson’s home again with the design in hand.

“Like I mentioned yesterday, can you make a staff like this?”

Batson was at a loss as he stared at the unexpected guest, who had showed up with a design in hand after just one day. He decided to look at the plan first and started confirming the details. Batson made a strange face.

“Eru, what... is this?”

“Winchester Rifle.”

“What? I’ve never heard of a staff by that name, and the shape... is weird... Why is the bottom so wide? And what is with this protruding piece here?”

“Well, this is known as the stock...”

Some things couldn’t be explained with just a design drawing. Eru answered Batson’s queries and explained them in detail.

“Eh, I will give it a shot.”

Batson didn’t really understand, but he took the job anyway. He promised Eru he would craft this strange magic staff. Eru was relieved, and felt that this was a good chance to see Batson’s artisan skills.

Several days later, Eru visited Batson's place for the third time on Batson's invitation. The unique weapon designed by him was presented in physical form.

The handle resembled the stock of a rifle, thick and slightly bent, but there were no triggers. A crystal catalyst was attached to the tip, the part where the sight of a gun should be. There were no chambers and magazines as it was not an actual gun. In place of the barrel was a short sword fixed in place. This was the bayonet designed in this alternate world... 'Gun staff'.

"The carpentry is done by me, my dad helped me with the metallic bits."

"Did he lecture you? If it was too much trouble, making all of it out of wood would have been fine too."

When Eru visited a few days ago, he heard that Batson's father was very busy. Eru did not want to press him, and just asked Batson to do what he could.

"Eh, for some reason he was very interested when I was making it, and gave me a hand."

Eru nodded in agreement. He thanked Batson and took 'that' in his hand hurriedly. He tried out the size, weight, and balance, the finished product was no different from the design. The dwarves were incredible, their skills were truly astounding.

"Alright, I completed it as you asked... it turned out weird, what do you plan to do with it?"

"It will be quicker to show you."

Eru tried wielding the 'staff' and asked Batson for a place to test out magic. The two of them headed to the yard behind the smith shop, where a few target boards meant to test out swords were erected. Eru aimed at one and slashed at it, casting an intermediate wind spell just before it hit... Sonic Blade. He used the crystal catalyst on the staff to convert mana into physical form, emitting a shockwave from the blade and splitting the target cleanly in half. Eru took aim at the top half that was falling and casted an intermediate fire spell... Fireball. It connected with the target and exploded, leaving a cloud of dust in its wake. The incredible performance of the staff made Eru smile, but Batson was stunned.

"How should I put this? It is too weird and out of this world."

"Eh. Let's leave it at that. Batson, you did great! Seems that using magic in the future will be interesting!"

"Eh, as long as you are happy."

"By the way, can you make another one for me?"

“Don’t be so shameless with your requests.”

Eru received the second bayonet staff that he wanted. These two bayonet staves officially named ‘Winchester’ were kept in a specially made sheath worn around his waist. Eru kept them with him at all times.

The completion of the gun staff, which was suitable for close quarters fighting and ranged combat, was the key to enhancing his mobility and firepower, influencing his fighting style greatly.

Knights & Magic - Volume 1 - Chapter 3

One day, Ernesti sat with his arms crossed in the living room at home, thinking with a serious expression. The reason was the letter spread on the table before him, with 'Laihiala Pilot Academy student prospectus' written on the top. At the age of eight and a half years, he finally received an offer to attend Laihiala Pilot Academy. Eru's family resided in Laihiala Academy City, named after the best educational facility in Fremmevira, Laihiala Pilot Academy. The education system was divided into three stages, primary school from age 9, middle school from age twelve, and high school from age 15, taking three years for each stage. Most students only complete the first six years of school because high school was similar to college on earth, intended for students who seek further specialised education. It was customary to recognise all those above the age of fifteen as adults. Most people started their career around the age of 18, but depending upon the circumstances, some may join the workforce at 15. Even though Laihiala Academy had the term 'pilot' in its name, not everyone enrolled had the goal of being a Knight or a Knight runner. One reason was the sponsorship from the kingdom for primary and middle school education, so children from all social standings studied there. Fremmevira's education system differed from modern compulsory education, a result of the special circumstances of the nation. Fremmevira was known as the 'Kingdom of Knights'. Its name sounded great, but it actually meant that 'battles' occurred frequently. There was a large number of Demon beasts lurking on the outskirts of the nation, where the majority of the citizens were defenseless farmers working on the vast fields, making them vulnerable to attacks. The threat had always been there. In order to secure a steady supply of tax and food, protection of the farmers became an important policy to the nation, but Fremmevira did not plan to eradicate all of the Demon beasts because they appeared to be infinite. The Knights existed to protect the citizens, but there were lapses in their defence due to the large area under their protection. The Knights were usually deployed after the discovery of a Demon beast, which was a passive strategy. This meant that the citizens would be under threat before the Knights moved in, to intercept. With this historical background, at some point the farmers hoped to possess skills to protect themselves, which was fulfilled by the nation in short order, by setting up a ministry and related facilities to teach them the minimum combat techniques, and magic knowledge needed for defence. In the end, Fremmevira was not a peaceful nation; even the farmers needed to pick up weapons to defend themselves. There was opposition among the aristocrats ruling the country, on educating the lowly farmers to fight, but the policy remained in place to keep the nation running. Based on the results, the policy was a success. By pushing for a minimum standard of education among all people, it unified the citizens and their concept of pride as a nation. The improvement in domestic security was also a lucky bonus. With this back-story, a trend of setting up education facilities was started all over the country. Laihiala Pilot Academy took advantage of its geographic

location near the Capital and enrolled students who were peasants, merchants, and even nobles. The academy was thus divided into an agricultural faculty, a business faculty, a pilot faculty, etc. All majors included classes on combat techniques, but most of the curriculum was tailored to make the students employable. The school holds many different classes to accommodate the family circumstances of its students, as well. Students need to attend at least 3 years of class and achieve a certain level of proficiency to graduate. Chid and Ady sat beside Eru, who was studying the prospectus seriously. They had already flipped through the prospectus, and were eating the snacks on the table. When the snacks were almost gone, Eru was still deep in thought, which surprised them. "Hey, what's troubling you? You wanted to be a Knight, right? Just take the Knighthood major." "Erm, that was my plan... But there is something bothering me." "Bothering you? Is it something like, 'the Knighthood major is too easy'?" "No, that's not it... My goal from the very beginning was to be a Knight runner." Knights certified to ride on Silhouette Knights are known as Knight runners. Eru's family knew about his ambition, and Chid and Ady had heard about it several times, too. "The number of Silhouette Knights is limited, and only the elites of the Knighthood major can become pilots. The Knighthood major will take 6 years to complete and is followed by the piloting course. When all of that is done, including the deployment process... It will be a long time before I am actually riding a Silhouette Knight." It is not easy to become a Knight runner; Silhouette Knights are 'weapons', something created to protect the nation. That's why, it requires years of training before it is possible to pilot one. Eru thought about it for a while and faced Mathias. "Father, I have a question, does the Knighthood major allow the skipping of grades?" Mathias frowned, his son had asked something difficult. He understood Eru's worries and also knew how tough it would be. "With the efforts you put in, and your magical capabilities, that is certainly possible... but the Knighthood major is different. Not only are you tested on your sword and magic abilities, you will also go through ethics lessons, and you have never learned about ethics officially, correct?" This was a blind spot. Mathias continued with a troubled expression: "Silhouette Knight pilot training is the final class before you enter pilot school. Students usually enroll at age 15... But for you... eh, if you are not tall enough, there won't be a suitable machine for you to pilot." Everyone looked at Eru, and the scene fell into a hellish silence. Eru was smaller than the peers in his age group, which was obvious compared to the Olter siblings beside him. But no one thought this would be important. Eru looked down in utter disappointment. He would need to wait 7 more years to pilot the giant robots of his dreams. He didn't mind waiting, but no one would blame him for thinking the process would take too long. But not everything will go your way. Eru wanted to change the mood in the room, when he felt a shadow loom over him. He lifted his head and saw Tina standing before him. "I'm sorry, Eru. Because you look like me... your height..." Seeing his mother rubbing his head with an apologetic face, Eru opened his eyes wide and shook his head. "That's not it! Mother, it doesn't matter! I am still young, and this is not the only way..." Eru stopped suddenly as he remembered something, surprised by his own words and closed his mouth slowly. This inspiration gave birth to a new possibility. "...That's right; this is not the only way. I was too focused on piloting and wasted too much time. I should be spending my efforts in the right place..." Tina tilted her head in confusion, as she watched Eru slowly raise his head with resolve. "I can just make one myself." "Make what?" Chid asked on reflex when he heard Eru's fragmented words. "A Silhouette Knight. I will make one myself." "... Ah?"

“...E...Eru? Are you serious?” Eru looked more determined than ever. His words were too surprising; everyone in the room didn’t know what to say. “Wait... Wait a minute, what do you mean... by making?” “I mean literally. All my actions thus far are based on piloting, but now that I think about it, I won’t get my personal machine this way.” Everyone was stunned, was Eru thinking of hogging a Silhouette Knight for himself? Aside from a handful of powerful nobles and merchants, no one owned a personal Silhouette Knight. Creating and maintaining one would require enormous funds and manpower, going the pilot route is a short cut compared to this. That is the common sense of this world, but for the robot nerd from an alternate world, Eru didn’t care about all that. “That’s right, isn’t it? The machine issued by the kingdom cannot be modified too drastically! Why didn’t I think about something so basic? A custom Silhouette Knight is the way to go. I will need related knowledge to modify one completely anyway... I overlooked this.” Chid and Ady put their hands on their foreheads when they saw Eru’s evil smile, they knew that this was bad. The normal Eru would always act maturely with a casual air. But he had an unbelievably passionate side to him too, erupting unexpectedly. Chid and Ady felt that they were looking at Eru’s true obsessive nature. “You’re doing it for real? Eru...” “Yes! I am sure that I will be wasting my time if I carry on this way. Setting the goal of building one myself will be a good hobby, and is more practical than saving money and buying one, right?” Chid thought either choice would be crazy, but he chose silence intelligently. Mathias glanced at the uninterested Chid and said sternly: “Eru... I understand how you feel, but it is not as simple as you think.” “I know, father. But if possible, I want a personal Silhouette Knight, so I am going to do all I can.” “I see... alright, then. But, work hard on your Knight lessons, too.” “I will. I really want to be a pilot, so I won’t take it lightly.” Eru had no hesitation on his face. Ady started patting Eru’s head for some reason, moving from being stunned to being impressed. “Well, you are really willing to do whatever it takes for your goal.” “... I am a bit concerned with the way you put it, but there is no reason to give up when there are choices for me to take.” “Amazing. Eru looks so cute, but is so passionate.” Because of how I look, normal methods won’t work on me. Eru looked out the window; he could see the facility that took up half the space in the city... Laihiala Pilot Academy. “Well... I am looking forward to the day I go to school in Laihiala.” Mathias and Tina smiled at each other; they didn’t want to see their son depressed. Even though his goal was ridiculous, if it is Eru, he can definitely strive towards it wholeheartedly. “... I don’t want to lose, Eru is too amazing.” “Chid?” “Noth... Nothing. Okay, let’s work hard to be Knights!” “Yeah!” Chid and Ady had decided to major in Knighthood, too. The three of them wanted to work hard on their goal together at Laihiala Pilot Academy, and looked forward to their campus life in the future. == C.E. 1274 The season changed to spring, the time for Laihiala Pilot Academy to welcome new students. Laihiala Pilot Academy didn’t only take in students from Laihiala city but also from the Capital, the neighbouring city, and all over the nation. Taking into account the possibility of a Demon beast attacks and traffic conditions, most of the students leave for academy city early, so new faces could be seen around the dormitory in recent days. On the morning of the entrance ceremony, Ernesti, Archid, and Adeltrud walked to campus along with Batson. With the dormitory filled with students from foreign countries, local students usually commuted to school from home. Laihiala Academy City was surrounded by a giant city wall, but Laihiala Pilot Academy had a wall of its own. Although its purpose was to demarcate the campus grounds, with the vast amount of land that makes up the

academy, the continuous line of walls extended to the streets, becoming a well-known landmark. "Now that I think about it, I have gotten used to the wall but have never gone in..." "You can go in as much as you like from now on." "That's right." The group walked along the wall and reached the tall school gates shortly. This was the main entrance into the academy. Because the piloting students will ride on Silhouette Knights, the gates were adjusted to accommodate their height. The door was wide open for the entrance ceremony. The four of them were about to enter excitedly when Eru suddenly stopped. Chid, Ady, and Batson looked back with surprise, but understood when they saw the things beside the gates. On either side of the main gate were Silhouette Knights, welcoming all of the visitors and incoming students. The group had to drag Eru, who looked like he was about to prostrate himself before them, away and entered the academy. The most important part of the schedule was the entrance ceremony. The ceremony mostly consisted of listening to speeches given by the teachers. After lunch, the teachers would lead their students away, and give them a brief introduction to the content of the course. Although they were divided into various faculties, primary school focused more on the basics, with common modules across the whole school year. The division was very vague, and the contents only start to vary during middle school. The entrance ceremony was held in the grand hall. The group gazed in awe at the gigantic scale of the campus, but Eru, who had visited his father's workplace before, knew the way and walked confidently towards the grand hall, while the other three desperately chased after him to keep the short Eru in sight. "It's great that we don't need others to lead us, but it is easy to lose track of Eru. He is really small." "Right, it would be easier to locate him if he was taller, but that's fine. He is cuter this way!" "I didn't grow much either." Eru couldn't stand them being so noisy and spoke up. "I'm going to leave Chid and Ady behind." "Ah, I have an idea! We won't lose Eru if I hug him right?" "I'm not okay with that." As the group was joking around, the grand hall was already overflowing with people when they arrived. Everyone here was a new student, as expected of the largest educational institute in the nation. They thought it would be too crowded to even stand in the grand hall, but they somehow found some seats. The school had already anticipated this overwhelming crowd. The ceremony began in the grand hall filled with tense freshmen. Grandfather of Ernesti... Dean Lauri Echevarria started off the address, followed by esteemed members of the academy. The four children who listened to the speech with their backs straight started to feel irritated as the event dragged on. Although they displayed patience uncommon for children, they still had bored expressions by the end of the ceremony. Fortunately, the torment stopped before noon. With the end of the speeches, the entrance ceremony drew to a close, and the freshmen filed out of the grand hall. It was lunch time, so the group headed for the school canteen. Some people bought food there; others took out their lunch boxes. Upperclassmen, who were familiar with the place headed to the eateries outside the campus. Everyone settled down to eat their lunch in their own way, but the cafeteria remained crowded. In this chaos, a prominent group sat in a corner of the canteen. One of them was a pretty girl, who had short, silvery hair with a hint of purple. The other two had unkempt black hair and wavy shoulder-length black hair, a boy and girl who shared a similar feeling. The last was a young dwarf who had reddish brown hair. From afar, the members of this group had nothing in common. Even though the group drew many curious glances, no one had the courage to approach them. "The canteen is incredibly crowded." "But we found a place to sit immediately, which is great." "They offered their seats to us

immediately... I wonder why?" Eru chatted with Batson as he ate his crepe covered in pie crust. It was a mini crepe with pie crust that was easy to carry, and fitted nicely into Eru's small hand. Ady looked very pleased, as she watched Eru eat the biscuit in silence. "Are there speeches in the afternoon? They are too long winded." "Doesn't matter, you didn't listen to them anyway Chid. Didn't you fall asleep?" "Let's eat our lunch first. There are lots of people here, so we should finish up and let others sit, too." There were empty seats at their table. Eru felt embarrassed that no one else was sitting with them. At this moment, a female student ignored all of this, and walked towards them. Her blonde hair swayed as she walked in confident strides, causing a small commotion among the students. It was rare for her to show up here after all. She sat in the empty chair as if they were planning to meet up. She was obviously older than Eru and the others, an upperclassman. There was no standard uniform in Laihiala Pilot Academy. Her clothes seemed to be low profile but well made, with accessories that didn't hinder her movements. Eru guessed she must have come from a well off family, either a daughter of wealthy merchants or aristocrats. There were two types of reaction from them: Eru and Batson looked at the stranger with confusion, while Chid and Ady held their breath and stared at her. Those were not passionate eyes for a beautiful lady, but bashful eyes. Eru didn't understand this, but he was certain the girl had connections with the twins. The pretty girl who came uninvited smiled as she looked at the tense twins, then faced Eru and Batson. Her smile became gentler as she introduced herself. "Hello my cute friend. My name is Stefania Serrati. What about you?" Eru was lost for a moment, but he put down his half bitten biscuit, sat properly and replied: "I am Ernesti Echevarria, this is Batson Termonen, as for these two..." "It's fine, I'm already acquainted with them. Archid, Adeltrud, long time no see, I'm glad you are both healthy." Stefania had been smiling gently the entire time, but Chid tensed up his normally sleepy face and said: "Long time no see, Stefania onee-sama." The stiff tone didn't sound like something Chid would normally use. Stefania's face collapsed, but she regained her smile immediately. "... Both of you are at the age where you are attending school at Laihiala. Since we have the opportunity to study at the same school, why don't you visit me?" "Stefania onee-sama is in the third year of primary school, right? Oh yeah, Baltsar onii-sama is studying here, too?" "Right, he is majoring in Knighthood, 2nd year of primary school, you will have the chance to meet him soon." Compared to Stefania's attitude, the demeanour of the twins was weird. Chid was stiff in his tone while Ady was uncharacteristically quiet. It seemed like they had family ties, but it felt unnatural. Batson routinely switched his gaze from one member to the next in this awkward atmosphere. Everyone had stopped eating. Suddenly, Eru finished his biscuit aggressively, contrary to his small stature. He ignored the surprised stares of others, wiped his mouth and smiled. "Alright, we have finished our food. The cafeteria is too crowded, and it's not considerate to hog the table, let's go somewhere else. What do you think?" "... Ri... Right. Both of you are majoring in Knighthood? There will be plenty of chances for us to meet, let's chat slowly next time." Stefania, who had a regrettable expression, patted Eru's head for some reason before leaving. The four baffled children were left behind. Batson wanted to clarify things, but Eru said that lunch break was over, and they should head for the classroom. He forcefully left his seat and left. Batson wasn't satisfied, but he still went towards the crafting faculty, while the trio moved towards the Knighthood department with an awkward atmosphere. There was nothing worth mentioning about the afternoon's freshmen welcome activities. They were simply briefed on the schedule for the

future, and the contents for lessons tomorrow. After orientation, everyone was dismissed, and the students prepared to leave. Even now, Chid and Ady still seemed troubled. They were not joking like usual, instead, they were unfocused and had an awkward air about them. On the way home, Eru led the way and told them: "I don't know the details, but don't be depressed. Class is starting tomorrow, so training will be cancelled for today, take a break." Chid and Ady stopped. "Eh, Eru." Chid called out with a calm resolve. "What is it?" "Aren't you going to ask, erm, about her?" "If you feel the need to share, I will listen." The air about the twins visibly eased. They looked at each other as if to confirm something. After a while, Chid started: "Eru, we have something we need tell you." "Alright, let's talk in my room." And so, the trio left campus and headed for Eru's place, to his room. As this is the place where they hold their magic lessons, the two were familiar with it. They sat on the table and bed as usual, but the difference was that they were quiet. After a while, Chid began: "Ah... Erm, simply put, our father is an impressive noble." After being silent for so long, those words were too direct. Eru blinked and asked: "So you are aristocrats? But you two have not done anything noble like? And, even joined me for training." "It's complicated... actually not. Our mother is not the noble's wife but a mistress." "Erm, because mother is easygoing, she says she doesn't mind being a mistress since she has us." "Father's wife... well, is very jealous and conscious of others." "Even if she doesn't like mother, her pride prevents her from feuding with a simple mistress." Even Eru wasn't sure how to react, so he simply nodded. "Mother is too obedient, doing everything to appease others. In the end, madam didn't allow us to live under the same roof as her, making a big scene." "And, we were given a place to live, that's why we moved here. The living expenses are handled by father." "Eh, that's how it is... Stefania Onee-sama that you met earlier is the daughter of madam." "Tiffa-nee is alright, but the problem is with the other two brothers. The younger brother is very irritating." "He likes to go on a power trip, bullying us because we are scions of a mistress. Just like Madam." The two of them complained nonstop and ended with a big sigh. Their expressions twisted when they mentioned the brother, making it easy to imagine all of the things that happened between them. "This brother you mentioned is in Laihiala?" "Correct. He is one year older than us, so he is in the second year of primary school." "I see. I have a feeling that there will be trouble." Chid nodded firmly. It's not a premonition; Chid knew that there would definitely be trouble. The life at the main house flashed in his mind. He had to bear with the oppression and the hardships back then, so he didn't spend too much time reminiscing. "We are still grateful towards father for providing us with the living expenses. But..." "If they leave us alone, we won't trouble them either. But they like to mess with us and can't stand us." They probably recalled unpleasant memories, Chid was gesturing furiously while Ady said moodily. "Since Tiffa-nee knows... That guy will probably come soon. If you are with us, you might get caught up in this too..." Ady was depressed when she said this. Her usual confidence had disappeared. Because she usually gives off a bubbly impression, the gap appeared wider. "I understand the gist of it. So what's next?" Eru was standing before they had realised it. "... What do you... mean by next?" "Do you plan to defend, ignore them, or attack?" "Oh, should be attack... Hey!" Chid unconsciously went along and was shocked. Eru smiled as he usually did when he is talking about dangerous things. Even Chid, who knew that Eru was not just a pretty face backed off. "What is with you all of a sudden? I am glad you are my friend, you would be terrifying as an enemy." "You are helping us? As expected of Eru! You are so reliable, but this is our family

problem. We can't trouble you." "That's right. I have no idea how much I can interfere, but I don't plan to seeing my friends so troubled. Just call me whenever you need me, I will be there." "... Okay, we're counting on you!" Chid and Ady nodded confidently, they were smiling once again. Eru looked at them and thought: I didn't expect them to be nobles. Their sister didn't seem to hate them... why is that? No matter what, it seems there will be trouble... Eru thought about it from an outsider's point of view, keeping this matter to heart. The upcoming school days will be more chaotic than he imagined. After the tumultuous entrance ceremony, they started their school life the next day. There were no scheduled lessons today either, because the briefing took up half the day. This was extremely boring for the 9 year old kids who just enrolled. Most people paid no heed to the teacher's presentation, and the atmosphere was clearly screaming 'won't it end already' for all to see. But one student was excited about a few trivial details. There... There is such a course... That's right, it was Ernesti Echevarria. And the matter that gave him such a big impact? It was the flimsy piece of paper in his hands. A table was drawn neatly on it, the timetable for all classes, probably basic information given out by the school to all freshmen. What did he learn from the timetable? ...There is a... 'Silhouette Knight Design Basics' course...!? But the timetable he was holding with his trembling hands did not belong to the Knighthood major for primary school. You can infer from the name that this course is meant for Knightsmith students, who are aiming to build and maintain Silhouette Knights. It is catered for students in their 2nd year of middle school (around 13 years old), and this course had nothing to do with Eru who was majoring in Knighthood. But, after reading such tempting words, the out of control speeding train... Ernesti will definitely go for it. He confirmed the Knight faculty timetable, and in the same time slot was one of the most important courses for Knighthood majors... fundamental magic. I must attend this course no matter what... this class is in the way...! Suddenly, the teacher on the lectern felt a strange sensation, as if a starving beast had made its way into the classroom, sending a prickling sensation down his back. He shivered, stopped his lecture and looked around the room, but he could only see a bunch of unmotivated kids, there was no famished beast here. The teacher shook his head and decided to treat it as a false alarm. He overlooked the fired up, petite student hidden in the crowd. The Knighthood courses that they are studying has two types, Fundamental Knight courses and Generic courses. The Generic courses are the same as other majors, while the Knight courses focus on magic knowledge, mana training, and swordsmanship. Generally speaking, human magic is classified into elementary, intermediate, and advanced according to its power and ease of control. As most citizens know elementary magic, they are also known as 'common spells'. Hence, intermediate and advanced spells are recognised as real magic. Faculties aside from Knighthood majors strive to be at the intermediate level. Since advanced magic is also dependent on the depth of one's mana pool, only Knighthood majors learn it. Ernesti knew through experience that increasing the mana pool requires plenty of effort. Hence, joining combat related careers such as Knights requires a lot of effort in mana training. Allocating more time on mana training than other courses is the unique feature of the Knighthood faculty. And so, the day to attend Fundamental Magic class arrived. This was a memorable first lesson. The lesson was not conducted in the classroom as the students needs to be tested to determine their magical abilities, and to be divided into different groups. Eru's trio had already learned magic before enrolment, so their foundations were strong. Apart from them, there were

some who had learned the basics, too, so they would be in a different class from those without any magical training. The newbies were placed in the 'general class', while the experienced ones were placed in the 'advanced class'. Advanced class might sound impressive, but the only difference with the general class is the experience. Regardless, advanced class students were viewed as elites anyway. This was because the advanced class had kids from noble clans and merchant families, who were able to receive education in sword and magic before enrolment. This meant that they had a certain standard of wealth. In a way, Ernesti, with his family background in the education field, and his disciples, Archid and Adeltrud, were exceptions. The chattering students followed the teacher to the sports arena. The fastest method to test magic capabilities was for the students to use them, and to cast destructive spells, they need to move to a specialised training ground surrounded by walls. The classmates gathered in groups of twos or threes, surveying the straw man targets wearing old armour, rearing to go. On the surface, this was just an introductory class. They wouldn't be scrutinised because of their magic abilities at this stage, but it was a chance to show off and garner fame, if they performed better than their peers. A lot of the advanced class students had confidence in their abilities. Everyone was in high spirits and did their best because of this. One of the students casted a Fireball, an intermediate level fire spell. An orange magical sphere appeared from the staff, hitting the target with blazes trailing behind it. True to its name, the magic exploded in a ball of flames upon impact <TL: Kanji is Explode Fire Ball>. The armour retained its shape but was scorched black, showing the explosive power of the blast. The students were in an uproar after witnessing this scene, very few freshmen knew intermediate spells before starting school and have mastery over the powerful Fireball. But Fireball was an impressive spell and drains a lot of mana, the boy was already at his limits after casting it. He was panting roughly, almost to the point of mana exhaustion, but he still looked very pleased. The teacher supervising the exercise held high hopes for this batch. With such mastery of magic upon enrolment, he would become an elite magician if he puts in the effort at school. The teacher tried not to display this thought on his face, and continuing to record the results in silence. "Everyone seems used to Fireball, should we do something like that, too?" "Right... Ah, Eru, what do you want to do?" Archid folded his arms lazily, standing some distance away from the area that was filled with excitement. Adeltrud hugged Eru as usual, as she conversed with him. She realised Eru was not being himself. Eru always gave off a gentle air, now he had a stern expression as if he was going to a battlefield. Ady tilted her head in confusion, her past experience tells her that Eru will only make such a serious face when Silhouette Knights are involved, but she had no idea how it is related to the magic test that is going on right now. The test continued. Next up was finally Eru's turn. His stature was petite, compared to his classmates, but his expression was stern like never before, and he had a serious atmosphere about him. Eru spoke when he got into position. "Teacher, I have a selfish request." "Hmm? What is it?" The sudden question surprised the teacher. "If the results of the test exceeds the contents of the class by a large margin, can I be exempted from taking this course?" "... What are you talking about?" Eru's strange words stunned the teacher. He frowned deeply when he realised what Eru meant. "...Ernesti Echevarria? What do you mean? Refusing to attend lessons? This joke is not funny..." "No, I am very serious. I have another class that I wish to attend, so it will be a big help if I am exempt from this course." The teacher was dumbstruck. He had been a teacher for quite some time, but he had never seen a student so

confident before. It might be okay for a middle schooler, but a freshman in primary school? The teacher wouldn't allow this request easily. "How bold of you, I won't accept it so easily. Ah, right, since you said that, at least show me advanced magic. Then I will think about it." "So it will dependent on my results? I heard that very clearly..." The students around them listened to the conversation and anticipated a good show. Most of them just wanted to watch the drama, but only Chid and Ady knew of Eru's strength and the inevitable results, they looked at each other. The teacher was also hinting that punishment will follow if Eru failed, and deliberately made things difficult for Eru. But the teacher did not realise that he was facing a demon who wanted to give his whole life to Silhouette Knight designing; Eru would give his all without hesitation. Eru started to construct the magical script in the virtual region in his brain... the magius circuit. He pushed his amazing calculation abilities, starting the processing sequence. He drew out Winchester from his waist, casting spells along the wake of his staff... Piercing Lance. This was a type of compressed fire spell, focusing the explosion on impact in one direction, increasing the piercing power of Fireball. And, he did not just activate one, there were ten Piercing Lances appearing one after another in the air. After completing the deployment of the Piercing Lances in short order, he took aim at the target, firing them off simultaneously. The long and thin flaming spears were right on target, and the armoured target was hit repeatedly. The narrow interior of the armour was heated intensely after being pierced on impact, the straw man was instantly torn apart. The armour could not withstand the devastating heat and melted in a red glow before finally exploding.

ピアシングランス
エルは瞬きするほどの間に徹甲炎槍の配置を終えると、
直後に標的に向けて一斉に撃ち放った。



The teacher and students were speechless, unable to believe their eyes. Piercing Lance was an intermediate spell but was a higher level spell than Fireball. Constructing the script in such a short time and activating 10 of them was not a simple task. And amazingly, Eru didn't seem fatigued after casting such a powerful spell. This means that the mana cost of the Piercing Lances was not a burden on Eru's mana pool. This was not something a freshman, who had just enrolled in yesterday, could achieve. This was more than enough, but Eru kept his word. He lifted his other Winchester... different from the one he used to cast Piercing Lance. The next script had been completed in his mind, a complicated and orderly spell, conjuring a magic much stronger than Piercing Lance. The air around them started to shift, forming a tornado in an instant. It went straight for the target from Eru's position with a large howl. The strong wind would definitely have blown the straw man away if they hadn't been nailed to the ground. The furious wind and rumbling thunder resonated within everyone's ears. The lightning created by magic was much more destructive than the Piercing Lances, turning the armour into dust with one strike. Thundering Gale... A melded magic using wind and lightning sigils, a real Advanced Spell. Eru started training from age 5, so casting these series of spells, including advanced spells, was not a burden on him, and he was not even out of breath. When he looked back, he saw a startled expression. The teacher was slack-jawed and stiff. Eru smiled happily and said to the teacher: "How was that teacher? Do you agree to exempt me from this course?" "...Eh? Ah, yes, do what you want." No one protested or challenged his decision. And so, Eru earned the freedom to work towards a bright future. Everyone stared from afar at the pleased Eru, who gained victory with his overwhelming abilities. Even Chid and Ady looked at the target that was blown away with blank eyes. "He made such a big scene, he was totally into it." "Yeah, he can skip this class and attend the Silhouette design module of his dreams!" "He was willing to go this far... Anyone who gets in his way will be burnt to ashes..." Ady said as she backed away. Chid pulled her back with a bitter smile. "That's wrong. He is not taking it easy because he has a goal, right? I will blow the target away too." Chid rolled his shoulders gleefully with anticipation. Eru gave him a warning despite what he did: "Don't mind me, but is it okay for you to stand out? You have an irritating brother here, right? Do you plan to challenge him?" "What are you saying, after causing such a commotion? Like I said, we will stand out with you around anyway." "I think ... you are spot on, I can't deny that." "Right? I will be right back." "Take care... Work hard!" The training ground hadn't recovered yet, from the disaster caused by Eru, everyone looked at Chid with sympathetic eyes when he stepped onto the field without a care in the world. No one wanted to be next, right after Eru's unbelievable magic display. Chid knew this, but still entered with his head held high. My tutor is amazing. It will be hard to catch up to him. I have to put on a good show, too! For Chid who studied under Eru, he was used to Eru's shenanigans and knew he couldn't match Eru yet. That why, he couldn't hold anything back. Chid steadied himself, closed his eyes, and started to construct a script with his magius circuit. To be honest, he was more proficient in power type spells, so he chose to use one. He drew up the staff he favoured and held it high, then pointed it at the target. The mana and script streaming into the crystal catalyst made the red orb glow brightly. He chose to cast a single shot spell, an intermediate spell

more powerful than Piercing Lance... Flame Strike. An oval shaped magic sphere flew out with a spectacular trailing blaze, causing a bigger explosion than fireball. The reverberating sound acted like a signal, drawing the attention of everyone present back to the arena. "... Wahhhh!" Chid fired a second shot, the two overlapping explosions blew the targets away. For him, two shots were the limit of his mana pool. He was unsteady on his feet from fatigue, but he still smiled and passed the baton to the next person... Ady. "You are still the same, only going for brute force... My turn!" Chid and Ady were twins, but their strengths differed widely. Unlike Chid who was good with power, Ady specialised in intrinsic control. She carefully constructed the script, held her magic staff with both hands and aimed at the target. A dazzling lightning appeared the next second, piercing the target with the rumble of thunder. She chose the intermediate spell of the lightning architect sigil... Riot Sparrow. As depicted by its name <TL: Kanji is Lightning Javelin>, Riot Sparrow changes lightning into the form of a javelin before firing it at the target. Lightning spells are powerful, but it is hard for the caster to direct it accurately. Increasing the accuracy adds additional burden on the caster, and along with its difficult control makes people view it as a higher class of magic compared to others. From the aftermath, the trio displayed incredible capabilities. They ignored the atmosphere in the arena, high fiving each other in celebration. Ady hugged Eru and twirled around while Chid was so tired he couldn't stand up straight. Compared to the casual trio, the other advanced students felt uneasy. They were thinking: What are we going to do, if we take classes with these three incredible people? As priorly mentioned, the advanced class had many scions of aristocrats and merchants, a bunch of children with large amounts of pride. Their childishness and immature pride angers others easily, but the scene before them was too amazing, shattering their young pride and competitiveness. They gave up and sighed deeply. Eru and the twins didn't care about their depressed classmates. Their classmates' troubles were just beginning. That fundamental magic class was seen as a catastrophe. A few days later, Batson led his petite childhood friend and repeated for the one hundredth and first time. "Ah... it's that way, that's the classroom you want... But, are you really going to study there?" Laihiala Pilot Academy had many grades and faculties, so it needs plenty of classrooms and facilities. Because the campus was divided by grades and faculties, a lot of students would only meet each other at the canteen during breaks. "Of course, how can I miss such an interesting class? Ah, here will be far enough, Batson." "Yeah..." Batson watched the youth enter the classroom and remained baffled. "But this is the crafting faculty, and that is a middle school classroom..." The atmosphere before class began was casual, some were preparing for the next lesson, some were working on their assignments, and others were just chatting lazily. "Quiet please, class is beginning... It seems very quiet today." The teacher said the usual as he entered the room, but he noticed that something was wrong and stopped. The students were usually noisy and rowdy before class started. To be craftsmen requires a practical attitude. In other words, it is better to try it out instead of thinking about it. There was nothing wrong with this line of thought, but that meant a lot of them just couldn't sit still. For these students, this lecture based class was unpopular. It was rare for his charges to be quiet before the teacher arrived. He might have felt moved, but instead, he felt that something was out of place. The 40 odd years old teacher surveyed the students in the room and noticed that they were staring at the same spot. He followed their line of sight and saw the culprit of this abnormal situation. "... What are you doing here?" The teacher asked the student sitting in the middle of the front

row, who did not belong here. It was a young and small sized boy, nothing like a middle schooler. Because the middle school desk was too large for him, he had to kneel on his chair. His position was upright and proper, with the text book 'Fundamentals of Silhouette Knights Design' on his lap, waiting excitedly for the class to begin. This scene was warming, but contrasted with the situation in reality. This was a classroom in middle school, not a place for primary school students. "I'm here for the lesson." "I see, because the class is about to begin. But that's not what I meant. You don't look like a middle schooler." "I am a primary school student from the Knighthood faculty. I came because I want to attend this course." Their conversation was going in circles, but the teacher, who was firm, warned Eru calmly. "Well, it is good to be passionate about your studies, but there are classes for Knighthood majors, right? You should come after you finish that class." "It's okay. I knew all the contents of that class. The teachers are fine with exempting me. You can confirm this with them." "... Is that so? Then, that's fine. Alright, let's continue with the topic from the previous lesson, regarding the structure of Silhouette Knights..." All the students retorted in their heart: "How is that fine!", but the teacher decided that he would lose, if he felt bothered by Eru and carried on teaching adamantly. The outsider who hogged the first row, Ernesti Echevarria, glanced at the teacher and opened the textbook happily, preparing to take notes. Being so pleased because of a lesson, the middle schoolers felt too lazy to retort. And so, the crafting faculty accepted this outsider and the course somehow carried on smoothly. "Before dabbling in the design of Silhouette Knights, you have to familiarise yourself with the structure, this is a simple rationale. But what needs to be done specifically? That is hard to answer. One of the reasons is the difficulty in constructing the Silhouette Knights. It requires crafting, magic, and alchemy, so there is a lot to learn, meaning the problem is with the amount of studying materials. That is why only people, who are going to make Silhouette Knights, Knightsmiths, will learn how to design them. Knight runners won't have the time to learn all of this knowledge." That might be true, but we can't apply this to the boy intruding into the crafting faculty... Ernesti. He is a robot nerd whose obsession wasn't even cured after reincarnation. He read volumes of robot designs and specification, even memorising the name and models of robots. If you teach the method of crafting a giant robot to this guy, what do you think will happen? He will treat the textbook as a bible and study it religiously, preparing for lessons and revising the topic until perfection, going beyond the scope of the lesson and researching tons of information. His attitude is great, but his burning passion makes the middle schoolers, who are older than him back away. "... Comparing the current military model Karrdator and the previous generation Salodrea..." As Eru listened to the teacher's explanation, he flipped his textbook. He always sat in the middle of the front row, and after a few lessons, that became his permanent seat. The elderly teacher scribbled on the blackboard with the clear sound of chalk, listing the basic structure of the Silhouette Knights. This includes the 5 main crucial elements... The 'magius engine' acting as the brain, the 'ether reactor' that serves as the heart, the 'crystal tissue' simulating muscles, the 'inner skeleton' reinforcing the structure, and the 'outer skin' as the armour. "As everyone knows, these two models have similar ether reactors; the difference in power output lies in the crystal tissues..." The Silhouette Knights are powered by the mana produced from the ether reactor. The ether reactor converts the ether in the world into mana, simulating the organic functions of living things in the form of machines. As long as there is ether around it, this device can keep on running. Normally,

the mana produced by the reactor will turn back to ether and spread it into the atmosphere. Hence, there is a need for ether to circulate within the crystal tissues to maintain its form as mana. Crystal tissues are crystal catalysts, that has been modified through alchemy, and able to change its shape under the influence of specific scripts and mana. Apart from using it as the muscles of the Silhouette Knights, this property also allows it to be used as mana batteries. “The script in the magius engine has been refined, but the improvement is not significant. Because of its ruggedness, it has been used for over 300 years without major changes...” The magius engine is responsible for controlling the heart and muscles. It contains gigantic and complicated magic scripts, allowing the pilot to control the Silhouette Knights. The inner skeleton and outer skin are simply a metallic frame and armour. But current technology cannot create the skeletons of the gigantic humanoid robots as a single entity. They have to be made from the combination of smaller parts, wielded together with physical boost magic and scripts to support its weight. This allows the Silhouette Knights to look tougher in its defence, but creates a flaw with the body being unable to support its own weight without a constant supply of magic. Silhouette Knights simulate the functions of living beings, an existence created by the combined efforts of crafting, magic, and alchemy. “Please turn to the next page. This covers the Silhouette arms of the Silhouette Knights. Although it is not directly related to the design, but this is still important, so please study this part carefully.” Silhouette arms refer to the ranged attack equipment used by Silhouette Knights. Surprisingly, the Silhouette Knights, which are a combination of magical components, are not able to use ranged magic on their own. The magius engine can only be used to move the Silhouette Knight itself, and does not include the ranged attack function. The Knight runner is required to construct a magic script when spells are needed. Of course, casting magic at the level of Silhouette Knights... known as Overt spells... is impossible for humans. There are rare cases where an individual is able to process the magic, but constructing the script needs time and cannot be used in actual battle. For Silhouette Knights to use overt spells in the heat of a fight, the magic script has to be prepared in advance. “For people aiming to be Knightsmiths such as yourself, there is no need to study ‘Emblem Graph’, but you must master the script at the level of Culverin.” Emblem graph doesn’t construct magic through the use of scripts, like the magius circuit of living beings. Emblems are drawn on the exterior of objects, which are then used to cast spells... It uses the theory that scripts can be visualised in the form of a pattern. When using emblem graph to cast magic, the mana can be channelled directly to the object the emblem is grafted on, in order to activate it. It appears to be a convenient technique so far, but because drawing the script needs a large physical area, it will run into the problem of the equipment being too cumbersome. If you take into account the difficulty and the effort required to make them, the emblems are not really marketable to citizens. But the advantage of using the emblem graph is the ability to prepare any spell as long as there is enough space. You just need to provide the power and the spells can be used without much control. Simply put, this technique is suitable for the gigantic Silhouette Knights, which are made from the combination of magical components; the only disadvantage is that each emblem can only use one spell. That is why the army created a variety of Silhouette arms in order to deal with different situations. It is common to see a Silhouette Knight going into battle with several arsenals on its back. A bell in the distance rang when the class reached this point, announcing the end of the lesson. “Ara, time is up so I will stop here. Remember to revise today’s content... Ernesti,

please ‘have mercy’ on us.” Ernesti watched the teacher leave after uttering these words, he was uncertain what he did wrong. He took plenty of notes today as well. By the way, his progress has already exceeded normal students by months. After finishing classes for the day, Ernesti returned home and took out his books to revise the content of the day’s lesson. Although he meets up with Chid and Ady for training occasionally, he prefers to head home and review whenever there are Silhouette Knights design classes. Eru learned a lot from the class. Thanks to that, he gradually grasped the basics of Silhouette Knight designing. But the more he understood, the more questions he has for the parts beyond the basics. In the construction of Silhouette Knights, the crucial elements, such as crystal tissues, inner skeleton, and outer skin, are subjected to a lot of wear and tear. Because of this, the country invested heavily in the education of engineers and alchemists. This ensures that forts at the front lines, and towns with appropriate facilities can supply the Silhouette Knights with the necessary parts. A lot of crafting faculty students, apart from Eru had actual experience in crafting. But the details about the magius engine and the ether reactor... the heart and soul of Silhouette Knights are classified. The lesson covered their functions, but their interior structure remained a mystery. Silhouette Knights are a major military force for the nation, but it is problematic for normal citizens to possess. Its distribution is controlled by the government, and the construction methods of the core parts are national secrets. Even the ‘kingdom of Knights’, Fremmevira, is strict about this. Withholding the crafting method led to a drop in production efficiency, so it cannot be mass produced, making the value of each Silhouette Knight sky rocket. Silhouette Knights are treated as expensive tactical weapons because of this. “...That might be the case, but I am not worried about the magius engine.” It is already known that the magius engine is used to control the movement of the whole robot. That means similar scripts can emulate this. Simply put, Eru intends to hack into the magius engine. It was an idea Eru had come up with, because of his incredible processing ability and background in software engineering. But he can’t do anything when it involves something that is not dependent on theory, emulating the fundamentals of magic in this world, the heart of magic technology... the ether reactor. “But... without more clues, I will come to a bottleneck... After all, ‘that world’ doesn’t have the concept of ether.” Uguu, Eru frowned and rolled around in bed. He understood one thing from class; the ether reactor was made from a special mineral called ‘Elven ore’. But the mining and methods used are unknown, all information regarding fairy stones are kept secret. Although Eru’s goal was to build his own Silhouette Knight, the worst case scenario was to buy an ether reactor. But even so, the price of ether reactors made the plan impractical. “Eh, no use worrying about it. Let’s start researching from what I already know.” Eru mumbled and returned to his desk. The notes he took did not have any blank space, so he took out another self-study notebook. He dipped his pen in ink and immersed himself in preparation, and revision, a time to research his hobby. Eru lived an incredibly busy life, but it was a blissful life according to him. Eru’s student life traversing between the Knighthood and crafting faculties continued for some time. In the beginning, others were irritated by Eru’s unprecedented actions, but they became used to it with the passage of time. Everyone started to notice the cute features that Eru had inherited from his mother. The short Eru who happily listened to the fundamentals of Silhouette Knight Design was treated like a mascot, and Eru had gotten used to being patted on the head as a greeting. And one day... “Ara, you are...” Eru finished his crafting classes and was on the way back to the Knighthood faculty when he

heard a familiar voice. He looked back and saw a lady with wavy blond hair, a nice pair of eye brows, and slightly drooping blue eyes, that were squinting because of a smile. "You are Ernesti... right?" Archid and Adeltrud's sister... Stefania Serrati said, as she walked to his side, bending down with a smile to accommodate Eru's height. Eru replied politely making her even happier. "Ara, I remember, you are in the same grade as Archid right? Why are you here?" Even though she looked joyful, she still asked. This was the secondary school campus, not a place where a primary school student, like Eru should be visiting. When she heard Eru's honest reply, that he was attending a middle school crafting course, her eyes opened wide from shock. "Eh, you are really smart, but why are you rushing to learn this?" In a way, this is an obvious question. A student will be hard pressed handling the work at their grade level. In the long history of Laihiala Pilot Academy, there are very few such independent students. Eru's answer was very simple and to the point. "Because I'm interested." "Interest...? Even though it's school work? Hmm... I see, you are a bit special." Because there was another class, the two chatted as they walked. Eru's actions were unpredictable. Stefania was surprised sometimes, patted his head sometimes, and was always smiling and in a great mood. As class had just ended, there were a lot of commuting students in the corridor, but they were shocked at the sight of the blonde girl and silver haired boy, giving way to them. Thanks to this, their journey proceeded smoothly, reaching the freshmen campus of primary school in no time. Stefania was in the 3rd year of primary school and needed to go to another campus. As she was leaving Eru reluctantly... "Ah, Eru... found!" Someone ran over at a high speed, it was Adeltrud who had seen Eru by coincidence. The petite Eru is easily hidden in a crowd, but with everyone avoiding him, he was easily discovered. Adeltrud looked gleeful when she was coming over, but stopped when she saw her sister beside Eru. "Ah, Onee... Onee-sama" "Ara, Adeltrud." Ady alternated her eyes between the two, and seemed to be quizzing Eru about what was going on. Eru didn't give a direct answer and smiled awkwardly. Stefania smiled gently as she approached Ady. From their previous encounter, Ady seemed to be bad at dealing with her sister from a different mother, but Stefania didn't seem to be bothered. "Don't be so guarded, I won't bully you." "Yes..." Seeing Ady acting so hesitantly despite answering obediently, the two of them smiled bitterly. "But why is Eru together with Onee-sama?" "Ara, it's simple... because I like smart, and cute kids!" Stefania placed her hands on her hips and declared confidently. What a forceful way of putting it. Ady looked like she was frozen on the spot, convinced by Stefania. As expected of sisters, Eru thought. "I've had my eyes on him since the last time we met, and he is the centre of some 'topics'. We chatted just now, and I discovered that this child is both smart and cute!" Stefania became more excited as she spoke, finally giving in and hugging Eru. "Nah, Eru wants to be a Knight, right? How about this? Want to protect onee-chan as my Knight? I will welcome you with three meals a day and sleeping together on the same bed." "Wait... wait, no! Eru is my soft toy!" What is it with this family, scary. And Miss Ady, what do you mean by soft toy? The stiff Ady who was rooted on the spot because of the impact of the confession was now yelling, snatching Eru back. She might have been too tense, but even her tone had reverted back to normal. Stefania was smiling coldly. Because she was beautiful, this made her even scarier. Eru saw her close her hands as she said quietly. "Ara, so that's how it is~". Eru decided to pretend that he didn't see anything. "Ady, your tone is back to normal." Ady covered her mouth, her face seemed to be saying 'this is bad'. Stefania shook her head immediately. "It's okay. You don't need to try so hard at school. I

am not like Baltsar who is petty about such things.” “Since Onee-sama... says that...” “Before that, Ady? Can you let go?” “Eh? Ah, sorry. You are just the right size, so I hugged you without thinking...” Eru broke free from Ady, while Stefania looked at her longingly. “Yeah... Eru’s height is just nice for a hug...” “That’s right, Onee-sama, and his hair so soft and smooth...” “Adeltrud... as expected of my sister!” “Onee-sama...” Eru put some distance between the perverted sisters who were holding hands. There were many things he wanted to retort, but Stefania seemed so happy. Maybe she was just joking, with Eru as an excuse to become closer to her sister. He decided to think of it that way, and hoped that it was true. The sisters ignored Eru who was averting his gaze, and talked about how much they love cute things. Their discussion was so passionate that you could see a pink aura around them. Eru felt like escaping reality, thinking ‘just do what you girls want’, and he suddenly remembered something important. “Ah, the next lesson is starting.” The bell signalling the start of the class rang, as if on cue. The three of them rushed to their classrooms in a panic, but unfortunately, they arrived late and were lectured by their teachers. “Oh, isn’t that Archid? It’s been a while.” Just as Eru and the others were talking noisily, Chid and another person met by coincidence at another place. This was the number one person that Chid didn’t want to meet... Chid and Ady’s half-brother... Baltsar Serrati, someone who had always picked on them. Baltsar had normal features on a decent face, but his scowling smile was a minus. Chid frowned reflexively when he saw the irritating face of his brother, but managed to keep his composure thanks to his training since he was young. “Long time no see... Baltsar Onii-sama.” “I heard the rumours, although the contents are idiotic... I heard that there is an amazing freshman this year, eh?” Baltsar said suddenly. He was probably trying to find a fault, since he usually ignores what Chid says. Even though Chid hated that attitude, he didn’t complain. Baltsar was taller than Chid, and seemed happy about something, as he looked down on him and continued: “After asking, didn’t that freshmen have some familiar companions.” “Really? I never heard anything about that...” It’s finally here, Chid braced himself. Baltsar was more imposing than usual, there was no way the conversation would become cheerful. “Hey, is that the attitude you should show your brother? Are you a brat that didn’t learn manners?” “...Sorry.” “Forget it. I am generous and will forgive a brat without manners like you.” Baltsar squinted his eyes and deepened his smile, a creepy smile like a predator hunting its prey. Chid worked hard at hiding his wariness. The actual topic is coming, how can I get away from this...? “I heard you guys weaseled into the advanced class. That trash of a class has grown so much, but, even so, I will praise you honestly. Eh, although you are a bastard, we are still family after all. It would be shameful if you couldn’t do this much... That’s right, I said ‘do this much’. Freshmen brats shouldn’t know much of anything, right? But I heard a rumour that concerned me. How boring, if it was true...” Baltsar squinted his eyes further, Chid felt a sense of uneasiness down his spine. “I heard you guys made quite a scene? Hey, that’s not true, is it?” Baltsar’s smile vanished without warning as he drew closer menacingly; speaking in a low voice, so no one else could hear them: “Don’t you think you are acting out of line for a mere child of a mistress? Huh? A bastard? The rumours are probably not true, and I don’t know what trickery you used, but wouldn’t it mislead everyone.” “No, they did not misunderstand. Onii-sama, we...” “Enough, shut up.” The smile on Baltsar’s mouth had turned into a frown. Seeing Baltsar getting emotional, Chid was tense and ready for anything. But unexpectedly, Baltsar said without emotion: “Archid, what are you scheming?” “What... scheming?” “Casting

intermediate spells easily just after enrolment, and planning to become a noble Knight? Is that the extent of your ambition? Are you planning to bring that title to 'my house' as a welcoming gift?" Baltsar asked with his poker face. "Nope, I told you before. We don't want to pester the main family. My ambition to be a Knight, is for my mother and our future livelihood." "...Alright, as a gentle elder, I will believe my foolish brother." "I am very... grateful." Baltsar resumed his cold smile, patted Chid on the shoulder, and left. Chid who was left alone sighed deeply. He didn't plan to do anything to me here, but he won't let us off so easily. If he is just picking on me, I can endure it. I hope he doesn't cause any stupid commotions. But the looming sense of unease lingered within Chid, contrary to what he thought.

Knights & Magic - Volume 1 - Chapter 4

Spring of C.E. 1276.

It has been 2 years since Ernesti and the others enrolled in Laihiala Pilot Academy. Their lifestyle remained the same. First of all, Ernesti Echevarria...

“Alright, this year we will be working on ‘Silhouette Knight Design and Application’... Ah, you are here...”

During this period, when the school welcomes new students and the new academic year begins, the teacher who came into the classroom glanced at the short student occupying the center seat in the front row. As a third year primary school student, Eru has gained fame for attending the craftsmen faculty’s courses despite being from the Knighthood Faculty.

“The Knighthood faculty’s teachers have surrendered.”

“Yes, I am happy to meet teachers who are so understanding.”

He slightly tilted his head and smiled. He may have looked really cute, but with his background in bullying the teachers to accommodate his schedule, the scene was not warming at all. After promoting to the next academic grade, Eru used his abilities to destroy all of the classes that got in the way of the courses he wanted to attend. The Knighthood teachers were deeply depressed over this, and the craftsmen faculty had given in. The teacher sighed deeply, and focused on his lesson. If you ignore his shenanigans, Eru is a bright and passionate student, so the teachers gave him more leeway.

Next are the twins Archid and Adeltrud.

This is the training grounds of the Knighthood faculty. Class was in session, so no one should be here. The boy and girl practicing on the field were Archid and Adeltrud. They followed Eru’s lead to go beyond the scope of the lessons given by the school, and had been conducting personal training. For the past two years, instead of taking magic classes, they had been conducting this special training. Eru was not present because he had to attend some other class.

“Okay, I will be going all out next.”

“What’s up? Your hits are harder than usual.”

Chid waved his hands at the suspicious Ady, gesturing that nothing was wrong as he tightened his grip on his weapon. His build was excellent for his age, and the sword in his hand was one size bigger than the standards. Even though it was a wooden sword used for training, it was still imposing.

In contrast, Ady held two thin swords, and her battling style was similar to Eru’s, focusing more on agility than strength.

Apart from that, their weapons had something strange attached to it. Made from the wood of the white mist tree, a gun staff based on the normal magic staves... the latest ‘Gandiva’ model. Driven by his interest, Eru used the knowledge from his previous life to design the ‘Winchester’, but there was no need for the twins to use the same weapon. Instead, their Gandivas were more polished, evolving to the state where it could be attached to any sword. It was designed by Eru and made by their wonderful neighbour... Termonen Workshop.

The two of them adopted a stance and faced each other, activating their magic before raising their swords. They switched smoothly between sword attacks and magic, displaying the power of their weapon, which merges the sword and the staff... the ability of the gun staff. They were using limited physical boost. After Ernesti tweaked with its script, the spell was easier to use than the previous version, and more importantly, it improved the sustainability of the spell. They held true to Eru’s teachings, training their body and magic at the same time, efficiently improving their mana pools. The crystallisation of their hard work was clear for all to see.

With the start of the battle training, Chid took a strong step forward. His strengthened muscles propelled him forward, placing his opponent within his sword’s range. This was Chid’s preferred fighting style... practical usage of the length of his oversized sword. Thanks to Mathias’s training, his style, which places emphasis on the gauging of distance and skill, was a real threat.

Ady used the agility of her swords to counter this. Because of her limited physical boost, her slashes turned into a whirlwind, bypassing Chid’s sword and going straight for his body. Even though his weapon was large, Chid still managed to shorten the attack range of his sword, to ward off Ady’s attack. But Ady didn’t back down, shifting positions constantly as she waited for an opening. The fierce exchange made others question if this was really a mock battle. The two continued to spar until their mana and endurance were sapped.

Because these two learned magic from Eru, who thought about things differently, this sort of training was normal for them. But simple things for them... using magic and swords simultaneously in training, were not taught in primary school. If a third party was around, they would probably question their common sense.

“Really... I can’t stand you guys, what did Eru teach you...”

That’s how Stefania, who was watching felt.

“Hmm... it was magic and sword right?”

Watching the twins tilt their heads and answer at the same time, Stefania could only smile bitterly. This was not a style you could learn just by ‘learning magic’.

“With your standards, I’m not sure if I can win.”

“Really? Winning against the top student of Knighthood Faculty, who is also the Student Council President can’t be that easy, right?”

Stefania had reasons to be concerned. Normal students will learn using magic during sword battles in secondary school. If someone started doing so from primary school, how far could they grow? The answer was right before her.

She was the top in her faculty in results, the daughter of a Marquis, and with her distinguished personality, she was elected as the student council president. But after seeing the capabilities of her half-siblings, Stefania was still shocked. The twins were too used to Eru’s standards, so their benchmark was different from normal people. Stefania thought about correcting their mindset, in order to avoid trouble in the future.

There were only the three of them in the training ground. They were focused on training, and distracting themselves with chit chat, not paying attention to their surroundings, so they failed to notice the shadow lurking behind the thin wall near the training grounds entrance.

While class was in session, the sound of footsteps echoed in the empty dormitory, the students were all absent.

The person walking was agitated, his pace fast as he reached his desired room shortly, his dorm room. He unlocked the door with trembling hands and rushed in as if chased. For a dormitory, this personal room was spacious, and was arranged by the school with consideration of safety in mind. Aristocrats staying in dorms are all assigned personal rooms.

The male student stood by the door listlessly for a while. He couldn’t hold in his agitation anymore and kicked the furniture in the room, the sound reverberating loudly.

“What is... that... how could it be... damn, damn damn!”

The male student, Baltsar Serrati, cursed, feeling extremely frustrated. He was upset because he had witnessed the training session of his sister and half-siblings.

Baltsar was a first year student in middle school of the Knighthood Faculty, and has just started using magic and sword simultaneously. He was troubled by the difficult training, but his siblings were doing what he couldn't with ease. It was clear that their abilities were far ahead of him. For the proud Baltsar, he couldn't stand bastard children who were stronger than him. This thought filled him with rage, and he realised the existence of Chid and Ady was a threat to his goal.

Baltsar's goal was related to his 'family'.

His family... The 'Marquis Serrati family', is one of the most notable aristocratic families in the Fremmevira Kingdom. Their territory isn't large, and it occupies a place that is flat and filled with farmland. It is situated to the east of the Kingdom, near the Bocuse Sea of Forest and suffers from frequent attacks by Demon beasts. In order to fend them off, the Marquis commands one of the top bands of knights within the country... the 'Red Rhino Knights'. It is a critical place that borders the frontlines, and as a result, the land has prospered economically, with merchants passing through the main economic artery constantly.

Marquis Serrati, the ruler of this land had three children. The eldest, Artos, was the heir of the Marquis, receiving an education befitting a noble, and was starting to help his father manage their territory. The eldest daughter, Stefania, was studying in her second year of middle school at Laihiala Pilot Academy, while the second son, Baltsar, was in his first year.

"If this carries on... If that brat shows up at the main family..."

The titles of nobility are basically inherited by the eldest son, where the other children do not get any land or property. They need to forge their own path forward, most of them became knights or bureaucrats. Baltsar chose to become a knight without hesitation, since the Serrati Marquis clan was in command of the famous Red Rhino Knights. In the Kingdom of Knights, protecting the people from Demon beast attacks was the noblesse oblige of the aristocrats. It was natural for him to set this as his goal.

"If those bastards come into contact with the Red Rhino Knights... maybe..."

The entire Kingdom, including the Serrati counties, has no competition amongst its knights. The knights are expected to be ready to fight the Demon beasts at a moment's notice, and it is very demanding in terms of ability for those aspiring to be commanders. Being strong in combat skills doesn't guarantee the right to be the leader of the knights, but the stronger someone is, the more respect they will garner in a military organisation.

Baltsar imagined himself leading the order of knights with his brother. He had never doubted that until the twins showed up. This casted a shadow in his heart. Even though they are children of a mistress, with their strong capabilities, and ties to the Marquis by blood, they might seize the advantage and realise their dream before Baltsar. His entitled position being stripped by his bastard younger siblings was a nightmare.

“That’s right... I have to get rid of them.”

He reflected upon why he had let the situation deteriorate so much, and the conclusion was that he was too careless, thinking of them only as bastards who could never match him. Because of his foolish overconfidence, he ignored that incident during the first day of school. He realised he was wrong, the situation was very pressing and every second counts. He needed to work fast to dispose of them, but the twins were too strong, it would be unwise to challenge them head on. He needed to suppress their strength, in a safe and efficient way.

Baltsar raised his head, his worries had disappeared.

He was not dumb. His willingness to sacrifice others allowed him to come up with despicable and effective methods. The usual cold smile widened, and his ugly feelings became stronger than before.

One day after class, Batson Termonen walked along the corridor with heavy steps, preparing to head to his next class. He looked around and discovered a familiar figure. He noticed that person because she was a childhood friend.

“Is that Ady? Who is she... with?”

As he wondered about what Ady was doing, Batson became suspicious. Not because Ady was with someone, but because she was with a student he didn’t know. From afar, her face looked stiff.

“Should I alert them?”

Batson was not overreacting because Ady was with a stranger, but her expression looked weird, and that worried Batson. She might be in trouble, so Batson decided to show his considerate spirit.

After making up his mind, Batson turned around and searched for his petite friend, who was probably in a classroom nearby.

“Baltsar Onii-sama, what’s wrong?”

Adeltrud clenched her fists, her eyes searching her surroundings and her slightly fierce demeanor growing stronger.

Baltsar stood before her with his usual smile. That was still bearable. Although it upsets the people who look at him, Ady had gotten used to it. The problem was with the people around them. There were three of them behind Baltsar and four behind Ady. Male students who she did not know, blocked her way after Baltsar gave a signal. They were probably

his lackeys.

Ady was stopped by Baltsar in the corridor and brought to a deserted area. Although she was not close with Baltsar, they were still family, so she let her guard down. Ady thought she was being brought to a quiet place, so others wouldn't hear him picking on her. She was surrounded before she realised. From the atmosphere and from their unfriendly gazes, Ady guessed that this was probably not a 'happy chat'.

"These are my friends. Nothing much, they are here to help me teach disobedient brats their manners, eh?"

Baltsar's companions smiled quietly.

"I learned about manners in class, there is no need to trouble everyone."

"The teacher is not enough to teach the brats of a mistress. Your brother is teaching you personally, shouldn't you be lowering your head, and begging for your lesson?"

A hand stuck out from behind Baltsar.

"That's right, be a good girl and..."

The nameless lackey was careless... he thought they had the overwhelming advantage with their numbers, and the target was a girl younger than them. Ady judged that there was no need to argue anymore, pulling out her gun staff before he finished. She immediately used limited physical boost and elbowed the lackey in the stomach before he could react.

"You are too noisy!"

She needed to break through the encirclement to get away. She dropped one opponent, and took the chance to run with her enhanced leg power. Because of her sudden retaliation, the encirclement was full of holes, but just as she was about to get away...

"Spark Dart."

An arrow of lightning landed on Ady's back, at the command of this calm voice. She couldn't even scream, a hoarse sound escaped from her mouth as the air was pushed out of her lungs. It was not lethal, but the direct lightning numbed her body, so she tripped and fell.

Uguu! I screwed up... can't, conscious... fading...

Incredibly, she remembered the smug expression on Baltsar's face as she blacked out. He was not haughty like usual, but was wearing a foreboding smile.

Some time after Ady blacked out.

Chid had no idea what happened, and he was just a bit concerned that Ady hadn't returned when class had begun. When he was thinking about ditching class to search for her, he met an unexpected person.

"Oh? You were in class... that saves me the trouble."

Baltsar appeared before him. Chid was shocked, he had maintained his distance from Baltsar during his time with the main family, and Baltsar always chose inconspicuous places to talk to him. But they were conversing in a public place right now, and Chid was unsure of how to address him.

"Senpai, do you have anything for me?"

Chid couldn't hide his confusion and asked. Baltsar was smiling as usual, as he announced in a loud voice:

"I challenge you to a duel!"

The rowdy classroom was silenced, followed by an eruption of sounds. Students in the classroom chatted excitedly with each other, discussing the current exciting topic, 'duel!'.

"What are you saying..."

"You can't understand? Ha, I expected as much. I have let an eye sore like you fool around for too long, I can't forgive such insolence anymore. That's right, I have to set you straight."

Chid was baffled, because everything had been set in motion without his knowledge. Baltsar's actions confounded him. But he was sure of one thing.

"I don't get what you are thinking... Duel? Alright, it's on!"

He also hated Baltsar. His fighting spirit overcame the question in his heart, and he accepted it readily. Chid would let it go if Baltsar had picked on him verbally as usual. But if Baltsar issues a challenge head on, Chid had no intention of hiding his displeasure.

"How uncouth... your manners are lacking. Let's see how long you can stay arrogant."

Class was abandoned, and the whole group tagged along with them out of the campus.

Laihiala Pilot Academy restricts fights between students. It is ridiculous for knights protecting citizens to fight amongst themselves. Those who break the rule will face all sorts of punishment. However, the only exception is a fight known as a 'duel'.

Duels have their own set of rules: they must be one on one; the duel requires both parties to agree... a third party has to act as the referee... the referee has absolute authority; the match will be decided when one party loses consciousness or surrenders; they have to use wooden training swords, and spells that release projectiles are banned to avoid collateral damage to others. In the end, the main point is ‘settle it yourself’.

By its nature, the Knighthood faculty has a lot of hot headed students, so settling disputes by duels is common. There is even a fixed place within the academy known as the ‘duel arena’.

News of Baltsar and Chid’s duel spread through the academy instantly. They had been anticipating this, and the challenge became issued prominently, resulting in a large crowd gathering to witness the battle.

A student who was unrelated to either of them volunteered to be the referee. He read out the rules of the duel in a loud voice, and confirmed the acceptance by the two participants. When they faced each other, Baltsar took out something from his shirt pocket. Chid turned stiff when he saw it.

Isn’t that... The hair pin Ady was wearing this morning!? Why... Did he...!?

The shocked Chid looked at Baltsar, and their eyes met. Baltsar was smiling more intensely today, and Chid understood his goal, why Baltsar had proposed a duel and why it was being done in public.

“You... What did you do to Ady...”

“Hmmm? I don’t know what you mean.”

Baltsar’s expression twisted as if he was trying to control his laughter, confirming Chid’s suspicion.

“That’s right, I heard a rumor the other day. You can use advanced spells as a primary school student, an amazing achievement! Can you show them to me?”

Chid made a spiteful groan. It was obvious why Baltsar raised this issue, he wanted everyone present to hear Chid say that he couldn’t to humiliate him. The way he flashed the hair pin made Baltsar’s intentions clear.

“... I can’t use it anyway...”

Chid answered, as if he was squeezing the air out of his lungs, baffling the audience. Chid was one of the famous trio in primary school that was exempted from class by the teachers. The crowd was chattering, wondering why someone so far ahead in magic was saying something like this. Were the rumours false?

“Huh? What a joke! Ha! The rumours are fake? Really, to be exposed so easily! Where did that attitude of yours go? Hah!”

If eyes could kill, Chid would have murdered Baltsar with his gaze by now. Baltsar didn't mind and continued with a laugh:

“Hey, hey, hey, wanting to stand out even if you have to lie, what a naughty boy. Correcting the error of juniors is the senior's job, right? Okay, it's about time to begin.”

Baltsar lifted his sword and staff while Chid quietly attached his Gandiva to his wooden sword. What followed was not a duel anymore, but an execution.

“What's with you? Such a spoilsport. You can't use magic, and you're subpar with swordsmanship!?”

Baltsar taunted as they sparred. Chid was enraged and wanted to counter attack, but Baltsar was flashing the hair pin from time to time to warn him.

About 30 minutes into the fight, everyone could see that the battle was one sided. Chid was slow and was the only one taking hits. He tried countering a few times, but his strength was lacking. The pitiful state of the rumoured student disappointed the crowd. “Rumours are just rumours”, “When did the misunderstanding start?”. “The ending will be the arrogant junior facing reality”, “Such a boring fight”... There were even some who left impatiently.

But some of the students felt uneasy. Chid was hit directly a lot of time, but he kept up his stance. He didn't take damage? Baltsar, who was enjoying the overwhelming advantage noticed and took pleasure in tormenting Chid.

Since he can't defeat Baltsar, Chid had to tank the attacks. He was unsure how long he could endure it. Even so, he was still waiting for the chance to counter attack. He didn't know if he still had a chance, but he clinged on desperately to this hope. Chid's most trustworthy friend was not here, but he definitely knows about this commotion after such a big uproar, so his absence means he is on the move.

I'll leave it to you my, friend... You are my only hope!



Chid gritted his teeth and took the hit from Baltsar with a staggering stance.

At the same time, Ernesti was walking quietly along the corridor. After listening to his childhood friend Batson's explanation, Eru had begun searching for Ady. But he was troubled by the fact that there were no clues. Suddenly, someone hugged him from behind. Eru was startled, and looked up to see Stefania caressing his hair with a blissful face.

"Ah, so soft and smooth, that you won't ever want to let go."

1

"...E, Stefania-Senpai?"

"It's the fault of these silky smooth locks... You. Impish. Devil."

Stefania rubbed her face against Eru's hair, as she poked his cheek. Eru was baffled by her reaction as usual, but inspiration struck. Maybe Stefania has some clues.

"Stefania-senpai, you came just the right time. Do you know where Ady is?"

Stefania who was all smiles became sullen and worried. She looked at the confused Eru straight in the eye.

"I think Baltsar was meeting Ady."

"Balt... Your brother? He, Chid, and Ady..."

Eru hesitated uncharacteristically. He had heard about Baltsar... and things about him. If Ady was taken by him, there was no telling what could happen. But Eru still hesitated, since this was a family affair after all. Eru couldn't judge how deeply he could interfere, but Stefania blew all of his worries away with one sentence.

"... Also, Balt brought a lot of lackeys with him."

"I don't like commenting on another family's affairs, but that sounds ominous."

Eru's heart was not as calm as his voice. It would be fine, if it was in the realms of 'sibling fights'. But this is different if he brought a gang with him, which means Ady is in danger.

"I can't really ask you for help for this... but I hope you can look for Ady."

"... Will that be fine? Let me say this first, if he harms Ady, I won't forgive him even if he is your brother."

Eru's eyes are usually mature, but a dangerous gleam shined in them. Chid and Ady are his best friends in this world, if someone brought a group to harm them, he didn't plan on holding back. Stefania watched him seethe in anger, and dropped her beautiful eyebrows.

"... Please restrain from killing him."

"You are pretty cool about this."

"It's fine if Baltsar moves alone. Well, that's not really good... I can stop him, but it's not the same this time. I can't overlook this as the Student Council President, or as his sister."

Stefania said softly, as she tightened her hug slowly. Eru couldn't imagine her expression and simply asked:

"Can you tell me where Ady has been brought to?"

Laihiala Pilot Academy has a large campus, and most of them weren't used. Ady and Baltsar's lackeys are most likely in one of the empty classrooms.

The group sat Ady on a chair, tied up her legs with her hands behind her. It had been about an hour since Ady was knocked out by Baltsar, and she still hadn't woken up. The four lackeys who surrounded her were arguing about something.

"Cheh! Little brat, she hit me!"

"Hey, she's still sleeping, calm down."

So many people had been left to guard the unconscious Ady, to prevent her from making a scene when she wakes up. The noisy boy, the one who took an elbow from Ady, had just regained consciousness.

"Why? She is out and tied up, there's no need to be afraid."

"Says the guy who was knocked down."

"Uguu! I was careless!"

He grabbed Ady's hair and lifted her head, clenching his fist with a violent smile.

"Look at this brat, getting cocky because I didn't go all out. She is going to get it now!"

The other lackeys thought he was going too far. He didn't fall because he was holding back; he was knocked out in an instant because he was too careless. And, if he punched her and Ady wakes up, things will become messy. Their goal was to restrain her for a short time, it will be easier if she continues sleeping. Just as another lackey was about to stop him...

“Hello... Anyone here.... Oh, there is.”

At this moment, a shadow appeared from the back of the classroom. The group naively thought that no one would come, so their reactions were slower than the intruder's. When they realised their situation, they saw a silver bullet shooting out from a weird magic staff towards their face.

The intruder... Ernesti knew his ‘hunch was right’, when he saw the lackeys, or rather Adeltrud, who was tied to the chair behind them. All that was left was to dispose of the enemy. He drew Winchester without hesitation, and cast an intermediate wind spell at his left and right... Aero Damned. The projectile hit the two at the back of the room directly, and they were blasted away before they could even scream. Eru didn't wait for them to land, before activating physical boost to enhance his agility and strike at the boy who was about to punch Ady. The boy panicked and attempted to block it, but he couldn't match Eru whose speed had been enhanced. Eru cast a Sonic Boom with his staff while running, blowing the boy away.

Seeing three of his companions flying in an instant, the remaining lackey gave up attempting to understand the situation. Regrettably, his opponent wasn't merciless enough to let this chance slip by. The lackey raised his staff unconsciously, but it was broken in half. The other Winchester swing back horizontally... That was the last thing he remembered.

After instantly knocking out the four lackeys like a whirlwind, Eru checked to make sure they were really down and ran to Ady. He cut the ropes on her and checked for injuries. Ady seemed to be fine, and her breathing was normal, so she was probably unconscious. Eru was relieved after confirming that Ady was safe, and proceeded to tie up the lackeys who were knocked out. Fortunately they prepared ropes... although they were not meant to be used on them. After making sure they couldn't move, he looked towards the direction of the arena.

“There might not be much time left.”

From the commotion he saw on the way here, Eru could imagine the situation over there. Ady was kidnapped then Baltsar appeared before Chid, his actions were easy to guess. That's why he was worried about Chid who was caught in the middle of all this. But he believed Chid would not give in so easily. Eru believed that if he hurried, he would be able to make it. That's why he wanted to rush over immediately, but...

Eru looked at Ady who was on the floor and felt troubled. Should he feel depressed? It would be a hassle to bring Ady over, since she is taller than him. But he couldn't leave her here like this. Uguu, he groaned and gave in, struggling to carry her in his arms. It was a challenge to keep his balance, but Eru used magic he was proficient with to compensate.

“I must make it in time...”

In order to reach Chid as soon as possible, Eru took long strides as he ran.

In a place known as the ‘duel arena’ within Laihiala Pilot Academy, two students had fought for over an hour. Although the battle was one sided, it didn’t feel like it would end any time soon.

After sparring for this long, Baltsar finally realised something was off. As he expected, Chid’s movements were sluggish because of his scheme, and his strikes landed true countless times. Even though it was a wooden sword, normal people would still have incurred serious wounds that would put them out of the fight. Chid’s movements became slower, but he showed no signs of taking serious damage. Chid might not be attacking because of the hostage, but his eyes were still strong. He was obviously waiting for his chance.

Why can this brat take so much damage? Why is he still standing!? Is he going to buy time for Adeltrud to escape by herself? Adeltrud is very agile, but there is no way she can escape, could it be...

Baltsar laughed. Chid didn’t know that Ady wasn’t just tied up, she was under guard too. This means that his plan is doomed right from the start.

Chid was startled when Baltsar stopped attacking. Baltsar laughter was unnatural, and he attempted to stomp out Chid’s hope.

“Archid, are you stalling for time?”

“...!”

“I thought so. You think ‘that’ will come if you wait? I can only tell you it is all in vain, ‘that’ is tied up securely.”

Baltsar could hear Chid grinding his teeth, it stirred a murky joy within him.

“Well, I’m growing tired of this. It’s regrettable, but let’s end it, shall we?”

Baltsar flashed Ady’s hairpin and lifted his wooden sword. Chid tensed his face. To be honest, he was not in a good shape, contrary to how he looked. Although he was using ‘some method’ to minimise damage, it was still accumulating little by little. It will be hard to gauge whether Chid can endure an all out attack. But Baltsar has been sending out a strong message, ‘do not dodge’. Baltsar probably wants to finish this for real, his next strike will be at full power. Chid was not confident that he could withstand this unscathed.

The two of them put more strength into their stance than before. The spectators that were still around could feel that this was the final attack, and held their breath. As Baltsar was

planning to launch his attack and charge in, someone intruded into the arena.

The figure leapt over the heads of the crowd and reached the front row. The arc of his jump was huge, and he was moving very quickly despite carrying a girl in his arms. His footfalls were silent, as if he was stepping on a soft surface. The eyes of the audience naturally fell on this petite figure.

The figure was Eru carrying Ady. Baltsar cast a sideways glance over and made a twisted face when he recognised them. Ady should have been tied up, and he even posted guards. Did he overcome these obstacles and break Ady out? What are the guards doing? More importantly, who is this silver haired kid? Baltsar's head was full of questions, but no one was giving him answers.

Eru put Ady down. She had regained consciousness on their way here, and stood up by herself. The first thing she did was glare at Baltsar. Then she turned towards Chid, sliding her thumb across her neck with a violent smile. Chid relaxed his body when he saw Ady safe, and had the urge to smile. He nodded and complained to Eru who was standing behind her.

“So slow.”

“Sorry, there were too many rooms.”

“That so. Nah, never mind.”

Chid smiled and raised his wooden sword. Nothing was holding him back. The time to counter attack was finally here.

Baltsar wanted to scream. He knew that this was the worst case scenario. But when he thought about it, the damage he inflicted on Chid remains, even though he lost the trump card of Ady as a hostage. He should take the chance and strike fast at full power. Baltsar put his thoughts into action and slashed at Chid.

But Chid displayed his outstanding agility. His sluggish movements earlier seemed to be an act. He stepped forward lightly, parrying the attack and bumping Baltsar back with a shoulder tackle to keep their distance.

Chid had expended a considerable amount of mana after dragging the fight for so long. But he had been going through tough training under Eru since he was young, and had enough gas left in the tank for one final attack.

“I will take back everything you owe me in one hit!”

Chid yelled loudly and activated the physical boost he learned from Eru. A wild surge of energy flowed through his body, and he sprinted forward with enough power to almost crack the floor. Before Baltsar could scramble and get up, Chid's sword hit his stomach.

The air in his lungs was pushed out, and the hoarse sound ‘hyaa’ escaped from Baltsar’s mouth as he was launched into the air. Chid followed with a series of air combos before he fell to the ground. Baltsar’s body was twisted unnaturally. Before Baltsar’s body lost speed and started to tumble, Chid followed up with a roundhouse kick as the finishing move. Baltsar’s body crumpled into a ball and rolled away before stopping in a heap several meters away.

The referee came to his senses after Chid took a deep breath and ran to Baltsar, finding him sprawled out like an old rag, his eyes white and mouth foaming. The result was obvious and the referee raised one hand to announced Chid’s victory to the crowd.

The unexpected ending made the battle before look like a lie. The audience couldn’t keep up with the rapid development.

Although Chid was as formidable as rumored, far beyond the capabilities of Baltsar, they did not understand why he was being overwhelmed for the past hour.

The spectators looked at the young girl running towards Chid. They weren’t stupid. They could link the appearance of her with the sudden display of strength by Chid. The answer was obvious.

The eyes staring at Baltsar turned cold. For Knighthood majors, although duels are a way to resolve disputes, the glory of the victor is sacred. If anyone defiles the duel with despicable schemes, it goes against the way of the knight. The crowd was unsympathetic when Baltsar’s lackeys carried him to the infirmary.

But Chid was badly injured, falling on his butt after letting out his victory cry.

“Chid! Hey Chid, are you okay?”

“I’m not doing so good, I took quite a beating.”

“Your clothes are all tattered... Why didn’t you dodge, stupid!”

“He kept waving that in front of me... I couldn’t dodge even if I wanted to.”

“...! Sorry, I was... too careless...”

Looking at Ady’s tears and depressed face, Chid stroked her hair and said with a smile.

“Don’t worry, this is all the fault of that idiot. And Eru, thanks, that was close.”

“I’m glad I made it in time. But enough about this...”

Eru retrieved the hair pin from Baltsar without anyone noticing, and handed it to Ady saying:

“You are all beat up, but it seems like there are no serious injuries.”

“Yeah, that guy was attacking recklessly because I couldn’t dodge and was boasting about his skills.”

Chid said sheepishly.

“I used physical boost and hard skin just before being hit to keep the damage down.”

“I see. You managed to pull off a dangerous skill there.”

“I could do it because I didn’t need to think about anything else... And it worked because he was so stupid. If he concentrated his attacks on my soft spots, I wouldn’t have been able to hold out for so long.”

“In other words, this guy lost because he was too cocky.”

As Eru nodded, the crowd started to disperse.

“I will settle the loose ends. Ady, can you please take Chid to the infirmary?”

“I understand. Chid, can you stand?”

“I’m fine, my injuries are mostly bruises, just let me take it slowly.”

Eru saw the twins off, watching Chid’s staggering figure as he and Ady headed towards the infirmary. Only Stefania was left in the arena.

“Is this okay? Your brother is badly injured.”

“... He is, but his actions warranted this punishment.”

Stefania looked refreshed and shook her head.

“That child... He resembles mother that way... About time he learnt his lesson.”

“It must be hard on you...”

Eru felt conflicted when he thought about Chid and Ady’s family troubles. But he shook his head and changed his mood.

“Can I leave the clean up to you?”

“Okay, I have to explain to my family anyway.”

Eru bowed to Stefania, who nodded in agreement and left. In the end, some of the audience were interested in this commotion and discussed the relations between Chid and the Serrati family.

A few days after the duel.

The disgraced Baltsar was warned sternly by the school and his family, and he was grounded at home after some deliberation. To reform him, Baltsar was sent to the Red Rhino Knights for training, the place of his dreams. It's hard to say if this is a good or bad thing. But it is great for Eru and co who had one less thing to worry about.

One day, after school had peacefully ended, Ady spotted Eru who was reading in the campus garden. He is not a prominent person and it is not easy to spot his petite figure. But his head of silver hair was an easy landmark to spot when there are less people around. He sat under the shade of a tree, reading a thick book as usual. She didn't even need to ask, it was a textbook on Silhouette Knights.

Ady walked to his side, but Eru didn't seem to notice. When he is engrossed in a book, Eru will be totally absorbed and not pay attention to his surroundings. Ady sat down beside him, staring at his profile intensely. His blue eyes with long lashes gazing down at the book. His hair flowing down along his face, shining brightly in the sun. His lips tightly shut, reflecting his intense passion.

Eru is cute as usual...

Ady giggled 'hehe' happily and was preparing to pounce on him, but she was stopped by an image in her mind. The memories from the dueling incident.

When Eru rescued Ady when she was kidnapped by Baltsar, he had carried her princess-style to the arena in the middle of the crowd. She didn't pay any heed to this as her mind was filled with anger, but when Ady thinks back, she discovered that it was a pretty embarrassing scene. Not just embarrassing, she remembered the joy of being rescued by Eru, and how it felt in his arms, Ady blushed from just being next to Eru.

Hya, I thought about that again...

Ady was glad that Eru didn't notice her feelings. Her complicated feelings were making her hesitant to hug Eru like before. Ady was unhappy with how she was acting and forcefully hugged Eru. Eru calmly greeted Ady who pounced on him suddenly, and closed his book.

It might be strange, but Eru had been treated like a 'soft toy' by many others, since he was young and was used to being hugged. And Ady was the one who started the 'hugging trend', so it was no surprise to Eru, but he noticed that Ady wasn't her usual self and tilted his head curiously.



Ady was troubled by her unexpected actions. Usually, she would stroke his hair while chatting with him. But when she hugged him this time, she could feel her heart thumping intensely, she couldn't do anything else. Ady buried her head into Eru's hair to hide her blushing face from him.

Wah... Why did it turn out this way! Oh no, I can't lift my head.

Ady was too nervous and forgot that she could just let go. Eru was a bit surprised by her reaction, and decided to keep reading his book since she was not moving.

It feels like I am an idiot, give me some reaction!

In a way, this nonsensical anger calmed her down. Ady poked Eru's cheek angrily.

"Hey, please go poke someone else's cheek."

"...So cute!"

Ady regained her normal demeanor. Eru felt more comfortable to hug than usual, and she started to caress his head. The two of them didn't realise, but a few students in the garden were enjoying the sight of the pretty black-haired girl and silver-haired girl (?) playing around. That's how their daily life continued, every day was peaceful.

Knights & Magic - Volume 1 - Chapter 5

In the past, humans only ruled half of the Zetterlund continent, with the eastern land beyond the Aubigne Mountain Range being uncharted territory dominated by Demon beasts.

With the Silhouette Knights as their main fighting force, humanity pushed the Demon beasts back, and ventured into the east beyond the Aubigne Mountains. The humans were doing well in the beginning, but their invasion was grinded to a halt. The east of Aubigne was covered by the Bocuse Sea of Trees, with Demon beasts that could take on hundreds of Silhouette Knights lurking inside. Suffering huge losses, the humans retreated out of the forest.

There were vast plains of land at the foot of Aubigne Mountain, which was suitable for agricultural use after some development. To protect this piece of land, they expanded their territory to the edge of the forest and formed a country. This was the story behind the founding of the Fremmevira Kingdom. There are still Demon beasts wandering in the Bocuse Forest that might appear on a whim. To keep the Demon beasts away, walls were erected along the borders, and fortresses were set up at the place where Demon beasts show up the most frequently... The entrance to the Bocuse Forest known as the 'Rabidly Road' (Demon Beast Highway). Castle walls were then erected between such fortresses. As it was physically impossible to cover the whole border with siege walls, they could not completely deter Demon beasts that approach from places not covered by siege walls. The siege walls were mainly effective against titanic Demon beasts, and thanks to the nation's defensive efforts, the kingdom remained relatively safe.

This happened during a certain quiet night.

Balguerie stronghold was one of the fortresses lying between the Forest and the borders of Fremmevira Kingdom. It was quite far from 'Rabidly Road', even visits from mid size Demon beast were rare, an outpost guarded by ten Silhouette Knights.

That night, the guards on duty felt there was something wrong with the unusual silence in the Bocuse Forest. The stars twinkled brightly in the night sky. There were usually a couple of howls from Demon beast on a night like this, but instead, there was an unnatural stillness. They couldn't even feel the presence of the animals, as if they had all evacuated. Although it was unnatural, there was no indication of anything happening. Baffled, they continued their rounds.

The silence did not last long. They heard the sound of trees being crushed in the distance.

It was obvious that something was approaching... Demon beasts. The guards raised the alarm without hesitation.

“What the hell, a Demon beast so late at night!?”

“We’re from the Ravidly Road, what is it doing so far in the countryside?”

The knights in the fortress prepared themselves when the alarm horn sounded. The outpost was a hive of activity, as they mustered together their equipment with haste. Listening to the sound of trees being crushed, the men could feel the looming crisis. The Knight runners on duty jumped into their Silhouette Knights. The Silhouette Knights deployed at this fortress were the standard ‘Karrdator’ model of Fremmevira. The ether reactor was forcefully started from a dormant state, its hum reverberating around it.

The Silhouette Knights checked through their start up procedures, and hurriedly gathered at the gate of the fortress. At this time, the thing that had been crushing the trees appeared. The Demon beast was like a small moving mountain, covered in an uneven shell of rocks like a porcupine. A head and four limbs protruded from the sides, so the shape resembled a tortoise, an eighty metre long and fifty metre tall tortoise.

The guard on duty, on the wall had only seen an ‘Emperor Tortoise’ in books... a type of Demon beast known as ‘Behemoth’. Its primary features were its toughness and endurance. With its reputation of being a walking citadel, it was a difficult enemy to handle. To put it simply, the Behemoth’s greatest power was ‘Strengthening’. It uses overwhelming mana output to maintain its strengthening spell, and support a physically impossible body structure. It also enables it to move with a speed contrary to its appearance, and hardening every part of its body from shell to skeleton, possessing incredible toughness. It is said that a Behemoth mainly uses body slam to attack and can shatter siege walls. It’s ‘heart’, which is proportionate to its large body, can generate mana equivalent to over 100 Silhouette Knights. With its endless endurance, the defense of the Behemoth is almost impossible to break through. This was a Behemoth, a fortress like Demon beast with incredibly high defense.

“Demon beast identified... It’s an ‘Emperor Tortoise’...! A Behemoth!”

Before the pilots could process the guard’s screaming report, the Behemoth slammed into the walls of the stronghold. Its intentions were unknown, as the Behemoth attacked the fortress from the front. Using the body weight and the toughness that the Behemoth took pride in, the Demon beast turned itself into a battering ram. The siege wall and gate made of iron and stone were destroyed in one hit, the debris splattering all over. The minds of the pilots witnessing this scene turned blank.

After hearing the reports of the guard and the destruction to the stronghold, the pilot’s faces displayed shock and awe. Who would have thought that a battalion-level Demon beast would show up at a place so far away from Ravidly Road? A battalion-level Demon beast requires a battalion of Silhouette Knights (about 300) to defeat it. But there was only

a squad (9) of Silhouette Knights stationed at this outpost, ten Silhouette Knights if you include the Captain. This was enough to keep duel-level Demon beasts (equal to 1 Silhouette Knight in power) in check, but was overwhelmingly weak compared to a battalion-level Demon beast.

It would be suicidal to take a stand against the Demon beast, but the Knight runners did not waver. They did not know why the Behemoth was heading into the Kingdom of Fremmevira, but if they allowed it to push through without warning headquarters, the results would be disastrous. It was impossible to stop a Behemoth with the forces stationed at the stronghold Balguerie, but if they stalled for time, they may find the weakness of the beast. They hardened their resolve and charged forward bravely.

With the walls breached, the Behemoth broke down the remnants of the gate and walked into the stronghold. Its howl shook the fortress like an explosion.

The squad of Karrdators moved with this cue, pointing their Silhouette arms, 'Culverin', at the Behemoth. The knights channeled their mana into their spear shaped weapons, the emblem graph converted it into a physical phenomenon. Magic scripts and mana beyond the capabilities of humans to process were activated, forming overed spells. Flames erupted from the tips of the spear and scored direct hits on the beast with an explosive sound, burning it in a pillar of fire. Normal beasts would have fallen under this attack, but the Behemoth lived up to its name of a moving fortress, and was completely unfazed by the attack. But this was within the expectations of the Karrdators, and they continued the onslaught of flames with their culverins, covering the beast in smoke and fire.

The power of the Silhouette arms was strong, but the expenditure of mana was very intensive. All the Karrdators kept up the attack until their mana reserves were depleted. To replenish their mana pool, they revved their ether reactors to absorb ether from the air. The reactor moaned louder as it worked even harder.

The entrance of the stronghold was blazing in a sea of fire, after the continuous assault by the Silhouette Knights. The crackling flames and smoke shrouded the Behemoth completely, and the knights lost track of the beast. There were merely ten Silhouette Knights, but even a battalion level beast should sustain some injury under their all out attack. Just when the pilots were thinking that, a howl made the earth shudder, the shock wave dispersed the flames, and the Behemoth appeared from behind the smoke. Reality betrayed their wishful thinking; the Behemoth's gigantic body was unscathed.

The Behemoth rushed towards the squad of Karrdators with a momentum that didn't match its size, the speed was so fast that the Karrdators could not evade it in time. The Silhouette Knights were down after receiving a solid blow. The steel plates caved in, instantly and the limbs were smashed. The sparkling crystal shards flew out from the gaps between the armour. There was no way the Knight runners survived.

The other Karrdators fell back, keeping their distance from the beast. The Behemoth attacked with a deceptively quick pace, knocking away the Karrdator who could only fire

off a flame bullet in futile resistance.

The remaining Silhouette Knights judged that their magic attacks were ineffective and surrounded the Behemoth, attacking with swords. But just as the rumours say, the shell covering the Behemoth was unbelievably hard, negating all of the slashing attacks. Even though its whole body was covered by a shell, the Behemoth was still able to move with incredible speed. Just ten Silhouette Knights won't be able to buy enough time and would be in danger of being wiped out by the Behemoth. The remaining pilots felt an unspeakable terror run down their spine; this was indeed a battalion-level Demon beast. The Captain of the Silhouette Knights made a snap decision.

“Arlo, Benjamin, Claes! Are you still alive?”

“...Yes sir!”

The Behemoth went on a rampage again, slamming its body into the fortress with the force that it used to charge at the Karrdators. The stone-made stronghold was falling apart, it wouldn't last much longer.

“Arlo, evacuate all the people who are still alive and run to Carriere Fortress! Benjamin, alert all the neighbouring cities that the Behemoth is nearby, and rush to Jantunen! Claes, make for the Capital! Run at top speed, run till you grind the crystal tissue to dust, you must report this to the Capital!”

The Captain turned the head of his machine and looked at his remaining subordinates.

“The rest of you... Sorry, you drew the short straw.”

The three pilots belonged to the younger generation, the reason behind their nominations was unknown, but they had no authority to refuse or hesitate. The top priority was to stay alive and deliver the warnings, there was no time for them to bid farewell. A tinge of sadness flashed across their face, but they regained their spirit through determination and their sense of duty.

“Go!”

“Yes sir!”

The young pilots left the front lines on their Karrdators without hesitation. After the Captain confirmed the situation through his holo monitor, the corner of his lips rose in a smile.

“My brothers, we will be knocked away if we stay in this cramped space! We are abandoning the stronghold. Go outside and use stalling tactics!”

“Hey, hey, we won't let you come into our Kingdom!”

“Let’s show this damn tortoise what we’re made of!”

The five Karrdators escaped from the stronghold, preparing to fight the Behemoth. This was a hopeless battle, but their movements were clean and crisp. The Behemoth razed the stronghold to the ground and started its attack again. The Karrdators used a series of coordinated attacks to impede its advance, but the range magic attacks cast at random couldn’t stop the movement of the giant beast. They would need to use melee attacks eventually, striking the head and legs before running away. The hit and run tactics were repeated again and again. The Karrdators could only focus on dodging the enraged Behemoth as they fought on.

But even Silhouette Knights had a limit to their energy.

Silhouette Knights are equipped with ether reactors, a semi-automatic part that supplies mana by absorbing the ether in the atmosphere. But the supply rate is limited. Especially in battle, if the usage rate is higher than the supply rate, the mana reserves in the machine will gradually get smaller. The pilots were only human... both man and machine have their limits. With the depletion of the mana reserves, the sluggish Karrdators were sent flying. The lack of concentration due to fatigue caused the Karrdators to miss the chance to evade, and was smashed by a tail attack. One by one, the knights fell to the Demon beast.

But the five Silhouette Knights managed to buy a few hours of time, that were more precious than gold, while facing off a battalion-level Demon beast. It was only right to see this as the victory of their iron will.

The one who held on to the very end was the veteran Captain. The machine was full of countless scratches; the right hand was blown away by the swipe of the Behemoth’s tail. The crystal tissue was in tatters, due to damage as well as wear and tear, the mana reserve was on its last legs, he couldn’t even run away.

“... The rookies have escaped... This fucking turtle, your next opponents won’t be a half ass group like ours, but a standard Order of Knights. Prepare to be history.”

Since he couldn’t escape, the Captain commanded the damaged machine to run. He never thought he would survive, injecting his remaining mana into his command Silhouette Knight and charging at the Behemoth recklessly. But the best it could do was stagger forward in awkward steps. He tightened the grip of his sword in the left arm, and threw the whole weight of the machine to stab at the face of the Behemoth.

Maybe the Demon beast knew the concept of respect.

The Behemoth locked on to the last enemy blocking its path, opened its mouth and took a deep breath. This was a never before seen attack. After a moment, just before the sword of the command Silhouette Knight reached the Behemoth, a tornado breath powered by

magic, spewed from the Behemoth's mouth. The fierce wind uprooted the trees. The command Silhouette Knight took a direct hit and was blown far away, the crystal shards and pieces of armour raining over the forest.

The Behemoth growled. The squad launched many attacks with their stalling tactics, and with the command Silhouette Knight's last blow, a faint crack was left upon the Behemoth's face, lightly scratching the eye ball. If the damage of the command Silhouette Knight wasn't so severe, it might have hit the eye ball. The Behemoth surveyed the area for a while, and started advancing after making sure those in its way were gone. Its footfalls were heavy and its eyes bore no sign of emotion.

The largest Demon beast calamity since the founding of Fremmevira started quietly. What was its goal? The answer lies in the road the Demon beast was heading down towards, the largest city of central Fremmevira... Jantunen.

Knights & Magic - Volume 1 - Chapter 6

== CE 1277. The 12 years old Ernesti Echevalier and his childhood friends, the twins Archid Olter and Adeltrud Olter has moved on to middle school of the Knighthood faculty. Their other childhood playmate, the dwarf Batson Termonen, remained in the Crafting faculty. Due to Eru's influence, Batson has shown interest in the career of Knightsmith. The two of them can sometimes be seen together, talking about Silhouette Knights design and operation knowledge. As for Ernesti, he has been taking classes about Silhouette Knights but unrelated to Knighthood ever since he enrolled in Laihiala Pilot Academy. Eru has completed all the courses in the Crafting faculty after attending their classes for three years. After satisfying his thirst for knowledge, he is now unofficially attending Pilot faculty classes. Since Laihiala is a 'pilot' Academy, the Piloting faculty is the star of the institute. Only the best graduates from Knighthood middle school may gain entry into the Piloting faculty. Although it is generally known as the Piloting faculty, not everyone enrolled here has Knighthood background. The Knight runner won't be able to move the Silhouette Knight alone, it is still a machine that requires crew to maintain and service. The pilots will learn about control and manoeuvre. The craftsmen learns to construct and maintain the outer skin, as well as the inner skeleton. The alchemists train in the art of crystal tissue creation and repair. The sigilmancers focus on the preparation of the Silhouette arms. The various faculties in middle school are collectively known as the Pilot faculty in high school. With this background, the education policy of the Pilot Academy trends towards practical application. They familiarise themselves with the skills and techniques by piloting the Silhouette Knights owned by the academy. Laihiala Pilot Academy possesses 20 Silhouette Knights, a number that is more than adequate to man a fortified outpost on the frontlines. But they are the retired models Salodrea machines that are second rate in abilities. These Silhouette Knights has been repaired countless times over the long years, and each of them are used by several piloting candidates for training. The repeated usage has worn down the machine and it requires frequent maintenance checks, a heavy burden on the students, but also great experience for real world application. Organisation hiring Piloting faculty alumni comments that the fresh graduates has the ability to work on the frontlines immediately. On the training ground of Laihiala Pilot Academy, a mock battle between Silhouette Knights is ongoing. In the middle of the stone building, a red machine is engaged in battle with a white machine. They have blunt sword used for training spars in their hands, battling fiercely. The machine provided by the school has reinforced armour around the pilot seats, a design which focuses on the safety of the pilots. But a Silhouette Knight going all out is still very dangerous, so the equipment is nerfed to restrict its damage. Standard equipment is only used in practical training battles against Demon beast. There are no empty seats on the wall surrounding the arena. All sorts of people are watching the duelling Silhouette Knights from the spectators' seats. Training with only brawls is not real training; the analysis of the fight is

indispensable. There are people recording the battle logs, studying the skills of the pilots... some are allocating maintenance spare parts as the damage piles on; some of them are observing the effects of the magic arsenal. Most of the people present are high school students, but there is a small figure that is out of place here. Not only is the person short, he also has a cute face that is easily mistaken for a girl. That person is Ernesti. Because his stature is small, he is occupying the front seat so his vision won't be obscured by others, staring at the Silhouette Knights intensely. He skipped the Knighthood faculty classes he is supposed to attend, overcoming all obstacles to earn the right to be exempted them. He is unorthodox in his actions, but is strangely law abiding in some areas. In the beginning, Eru uses his cute appearance and mascot like character to gain entry. He was planning to watch quietly from the side, but he is now observing the battles and repairs up close, finding more places he can chip in. From the way he can easily keep up with the conversations of his seniors, his preparation in the last three years did not go to waste. Getting practical first-hand experience and knowledge outside the classroom made Eru extremely happy. Apart from greedily taking part in all sorts of work processes, he is very interested in the training battles. The Silhouette Knights — giant robots fighting before his eyes draws out indescribable emotions within him. The giant machines that emulate a knight in armour bash at each other with iron limbs wielding mammoth swords, even shooting powerful projectile spells. Eru observes the training battles with passionate eyes, not missing a single movement. As a side note, there was a rumour that a guy was almost pulled into a twisted world after seeing the pretty boy, who can be mistaken for a girl, blushing while watching the Silhouette Knights with longing eyes. “Eh, seems like Di will lose again.” Piloting faculty student... Helvi Öberg mumbles as she records the battle logs, a breeze blowing across the arena messes her short and curly hair. The situation of the battle before them is clear, the red knight is struggling. Its dual wielding blades and on the offense, but it didn't break through the white knight's defense. “Hmm, what do you think about this battle, Eru?” Helvi, who has been glancing at the data in her hands asked Eru, who was sitting obediently beside her. Their eyes remained fixed on the arena at all times. “The speed of Guyale's sword is slower than before. I think that is the reason why he missed the opportunity to score points off attacks.” “... I see. Now that you mentioned it, his attacks seem too casual. I thought the condition of the Knight runner is not too good. What went wrong?” “The movement of the right arm seems sluggish. I think it is because the joints or crystal tissues have been replaced.” Helvi browses through the documents in her hand and confirms the maintenance report of the red machine named Guyale. The record states, due to signs of stress and fatigue in the crystal tissues of the right arm, it has been replaced this morning. The movement probably seems rigid because the parts are not aligned. She found the reason behind the sluggish actions of Guyale, but she couldn't tell that that the condition of the right arm is bad. Helvi moans Eru's passion and attention to detail when watching training battles is better than those actively engaged in it. She found it amazing and wonders where his passion stems from. The white machine fighting Guyale in the arena, Earlecumber, fended off the attack and stabbed at the Guyale's chest. The horn sounded, signalling the end of the battle. The instructor judged that the spar has been won by Earlecumber. Guyale couldn't overcome its bad condition in this battle. The machine that was battling just now enters the workshop situated near the arena, and the pilots exited the Silhouette Knights. The pilot of the white Earlecumber was Edgar C. Blanche, a tall and dignified man. Similar to his appearance, he is mature and

steadfast, an elite among the pilots. The red Guyale is manned by Dietrich Cunitz. Unlike Edgar, he has long blonde hair, a meek and skinny man. His abilities are top notch, but he tends to get nervous and loses his head easily over small matters, his performance is inconsistent. He seemed frustrated because he lost the match. He started squabbling with the maintenance crew the moment he got off the machine. Instead of discussing the issue, they are pushing the blame onto someone else, even the bystanders know they won't make any headway. Helvi couldn't stand it and butts in. She explained her findings about the arm to settle the meaningless quarrel. But Dietrich's expression lit up mid-way and smiles sarcastically. In contrast, the maintenance crew looked annoyed. "Oh, no wonder the movement is so rigid. Maintenance is skimping on the repairs." Dietrich is suggesting 'losing is not my fault'. Edgar standing nearby advises him sternly: "Di, that's going too far. If the arm is not functioning well, you should adopt a different style in your fight. It's fine if you lose after trying, but your movement seems unfocused today. It is not right to blame it all on the maintenance crew." Dietrich's sarcastic smile disappears after being lectured in front of everyone. "You only won because my machine's performance is sub-par, don't get cocky." "The content of the spar is more important than winning. I am just saying that you should reflect on that."

"Is that so? Why don't you operate a faulty machine in our fight next time?"



Dietrich left in angry strides after uttering these words with a sour face. The people in the work shop have gotten used to this and simply shrugged. Eru, who was watching from the side-lines made a perplexed face and Helvi patted his head for some reason. The school bell rang, announcing the end of class and to start preparing for the next lesson. Eru was unhappy that the fun time is over, but still bowed to Helvi and rushed back to the Knighthood faculty. "Field trip?" Eru have no idea what his classmates in middle school are talking about, there seems to be some events. He must have missed something if the whole class is talking about it. Probably because he is spending so much time in pilot school. "I'm sorry, I have no idea. Can you tell me what this is about?" Eru said with a troubled expression. His classmates look at each other for an instant, and all of them started explaining at the same time. Maybe they enjoy talking to Eru, or they felt excited when speaking with Eru. It requires tremendous patience to summarise the jumbled contents, but it can be filtered down to these main points. - In order to accumulate practical experience in fighting Demon beast, all three grades of Knighthood middle school will be participating in a field trip. - The destination will be the region of Jantunen, the forested hill home to small Demon beast. - The first years will be focusing on the basics of camping and wilderness survival skills. - For safety, Pilot school will be sending several Silhouette Knights as escorts. "I see, it will be conducted two weeks from now." "Hey, did you only find out about it today?" "That's what I thought. You keep going~~ to high school right? You don't come~~ back much anyway." Eru tilt his head perplexly. Chid seems shocked, but Ady looked unhappy. Eru has been reporting to Piloting faculty during class and after class, the time he spent training with Chid and Ady have been dwindling. "Ady? Are you in a bad mood?" "Not~~ really. Totally not. You are mistaken, right?" But the way, Ady is crossing her arms and her strong tone seems to be announcing 'I am very unhappy'. "I don't think I did anything wrong. What did I do?" "That's right~~ you didn't do anything. You are not here most of the time anyway~~" This is what a hopeless situation means. Eru has no idea what he should do and requests Chid for aid with his gaze. Chid seems to acknowledge that and changed the topic forcefully. "We will split into teams for the field trip. Eru, which group are you joining?" "Ah, about this..." Eru glance at Ady who couldn't hide her curiosity and said: "If there are no special arrangements, I would prefer forming a group with the three of us. From the sounds of it, the first years will be concentrating on the basics, so grouping up casually should be fine." "Oh— we will be staying together then..." Ady's mood has obviously improved. She went behind Eru and put her arms around his neck in a hug like usual. No matter how old I am, I don't get women... Including the memories from his past life, Eru looked at Ady with his wealth of life experience and felt a chill. About two weeks later, Ernesti and the others prepared to go on their field trip under the clear blue sky. Large communal horse drawn carriages are parked in front of Laihiala Pilot Academy. The middle school students gets onto the carriages under the direction of the instructors. "Take care of yourself—" Batson from Craftsman faculty is not participating in the field trip. The Knighthood trio walks towards the carriage after Batson bid them farewell in a nonchalant tone. "Eru, Eru, this way!" "Don't rush; the carriage won't leave without us." The destination of the field

trip is a place called 'Cloquet's Forest'. That place is covered in forest and is slightly elevated, filled with Demon beasts that are relatively weak. Carriages are used for the long trip after considering the strength of the Demon beasts. Cloquet's Forest is a suitable place that meets the requirement of the field trip. According to the route planned, they will swing by Jantunen to resupply before heading into Cloquet's Forest, which is nearby. After all the students are seated, the carriages set off one by one. The long caravan of carriages advanced steadily on the road. The ten Silhouette Knight escorts spread out along the convoy. They are piloted by the high schoolers from the Academy. The dark red and pure white machines, Guyale and Earlecumber are here too. The Silhouette Knights used by the Academy are donated from the military. After the long years of maintenance by the students with free reign, their appearance has become unique and interesting. Some have meaningless and complicated patterns engraved on its armour, while others have eerily big accessories added onto its head, and there are armours that are pieced together in a weird pattern. The machines have been customised deeply, giving a 'that's too exaggerated' kind of feeling. The exoskeleton comes in all sorts of colours, having an elegant air about it, instead of being fierce and mean. There are many Knighthood majors participating on the field trip. Although middle school is full of kids, they are still candidates striving to be knights, so there shouldn't be any problems if they meet the attacks of normal Demon beasts. Even if this is a field trip, they can't be spooked by small Demon beasts. Within the Kingdom of Fremmevira, mid-sized Demon beasts about a dozen metres still lurk in the forest and mountain regions, and they might run into them on the road. The Silhouette Knights are the insurance against unexpected attacks. "I thought we will have a chance to fight Demon beasts, but it turns out to be a boring trip." Dietrich Cunitz who is riding in Guyale complains loudly. Although they are here as a safeguard, there has been no major incidence on this road for the past several years. Although the Knight runners have been assigned the mission of 'long distance manoeuvre training', this is a trip that has nothing to do with tension or motivation. "Hey, I know how you feel Di, but you can't say such things." Helvi Öberg who is piloting the Silhouette Knight 'Trandorches' instead of working as a battle logger reminds him. There are microphones inside the pilot seat, and the sound inside will be broadcast loudly through external speakers if it is not turned off. It is amplified to ensure the message is not drowned out by the noise of the Silhouette Knights in operation, so it is possible that a middle schooler might have heard him. "Both of you take this seriously. Even if nothing happens, this is still part of our training." Earlecumber caught up to Guyale and Trandorches, the voice of Edgar C. Blanche can be heard booming from the Silhouette Knight. "As expected from the top pilot, such high end content." "Di, didn't you hear what I said?" "Ah — keep it down you two, everyone can hear you." Guyale and Earlecumber fell silent after hearing Helvi and returned to their positions. Helvi felt uneasy about the days ahead while she is piloting Trandorches. They are not the only ones who don't know how to kill time. "I know it can't be help, but this is too boring." After rocking in the carriage for about half a day, Chid is bored out of his mind. Not only Chid, the students around him are feeling the same. They are four days away from their destination, and with their transportation taken care of by the carriage, the students on board have lots of free time. They can talk freely, but they are growing tired of the cramped space on the carriage, which can't be help. "Do you want to look at the scenery outside? The scenery outside is interesting." "No, the only one who is satisfied with watching the scenery is you. And you are really tenacious, how

long do you plan to watch that?” Chid looks at Eru with tired eyes. Eru stops gazing at the scenery and turns back, sitting properly on his seat. He looks really cute with his head slightly tilted while deep in thought, relieving the atmosphere instantly. “Want to read the books I brought along? I think you can kill some time this way.” “Books... I want to stretch my body. Eh, never mind. What have you got?” “Theories on Alchemy, volume 1.” “Is that a textbook? Isn’t it better to sleep then read that?” “You are right, but there is really nothing to do here. Why not follow Ady’s example and take a nap?” Ady is sleeping soundly in front of Chid. Her peaceful face that has nothing to do with boredom makes Chid look up to the sky. He maintained that position and suddenly thought of something. “Eh, it’s a great way to kill time right?” They climb on top of the carriage. The top is full of the students’ luggage. Unlike the inside of the carriage, there are no seats here, but there is no problems sitting down. “The scenery here is better.” The carriage advanced leisurely under the clear blue sky, the top of the carriage feels nice and peaceful. A breeze made Eru’s silver hair sway. He found a nice seat among the luggage and entered scenery appreciation mode. “Ah— this is still boring. But it is nicer than the inside of the cramped carriage.” Since there is nothing to do, napping under the sky sounds interesting. Chid didn’t care anymore. “Ah, so you guys are here.” Ady poked her head out from within the carriage. “You woke up?” “Yeah, you guys are gone when I got up.” Ady made her way to Eru’s side as she spoke, and lied on his thigh, getting in position to sleep. “The sun is so warm, it feels better sleeping here.” “Sleeping is fine, but why are you using my lap as your pillow?” “It feels nicer this way.” As Eru was at a loss, Ady has begun her journey into dreamland. Eru couldn’t do anything about her and started reading, looking out at the scenery occasionally. Chid ponders about stuff for a while, but thinks it’s too bothersome and gave up, using a luggage as a pillow to nap. Their leisurely journey continues at this pace. After rocking for three more days on the horse drawn carriage, the group from Laihiala Pilot Academy finally arrived at the largest city of central Fremmevira — Jantunen. There is a reason why Jantunen ranks amongst the top cities in the Kingdom. It lies along the route that leads to the west of Fremmevira and beyond the Aubigne Mountain Range. It is also the transit point for supplies leading to the frontline fortress to the east of Fremmevira. As an important transport hub, its defences are second only to the Capital, surrounded by siege walls and moats. On top of that, there is a large band of knights equivalent to a company (100 Silhouette Knights) garrisoned here. No matter how crucial this city is, there is too much military force for one city. But they are stationed here because of Jantunen’s strategic location, allowing them to reinforce frontline cities quickly. And in practice, about thirty percent of the forces will receive patrol and escort missions outside the city. By the time the convoy from Laihiala Pilot Academy arrived at Jantunen, it was already past noon. The city wall surrounding Jantunen is colossal in scale. Because of the existence of Demon beasts, traveling long distances is difficult, so this is first time seeing another big city other than Laihiala for many of the students. Everyone is curious about this city and this is the most anticipated part for many of them. “What an amazing wall, what are they defending against?” “The enemy they have in mind are Demon beasts... or rather, the Demon beasts during the nation’s founding. There are many more vicious Demon beasts during that era.” “Oh... That’s why it is so massive.” The students were elated when they saw the gate leading into the city. But the carriage did not pass through the gates, but are gathered in the open space in front of it. “Wait, aren’t we going into Jantunen?” “They already told us that the stop at Jantunen is only to resupply.”

Although the group can disembark and rest outside the carriage, but they will need to move out once the goods have been loaded. The students who thought they could get a reprieve from the dull journey starts to complain, the twins stare at the gargantuan gate and nags. “Man, this is boring. It won’t do any harm letting us in for a while!” “That’s right, I want to go shopping.” “Wait, that’s not why...” “Don’t you want to take a look?” “I am interested, but going on a tour with such a large group of students can turn into a horrible mess.” As they spoke, Eru looks to the side. It was probably arranged in advanced, the merchants came out of the gate with the goods, which are then loaded onto the carriages. The short break was over and it was time to go. The carriage left with the reluctant students on board and move towards their destination — Cloquet’s Forest. After traveling for a day from Jantunen, They reached Cloquet’s Forest. The road that leads to the east of the Kingdom was badly maintained. After rocking in the carriage for the whole day, they finally reach the entrance of a thick forest. The caravan parked in an open space near the entrance of the forest, the base camp for annual field trips. The students started setting up tents under the command of the instructors. They have been sleeping on the carriage on their journey here, ready to escape at a moment’s notice if Demon beasts attack. But they will be training for several days here and can’t stay on the carriages indefinitely. So they erected tents and used this base as a camp site. The seniors have experienced this several times and set up their tents skillfully. In the Knighthood faculty, besides normal training, camping trips are also conducted once in a while. Since they aspire to be knights, setting up camp is a necessary skill when traveling in an army. Learning skills other than sword and magic is a unique feature for those majoring in Knighthood. But it is not easy for the first years. Although they learned and practiced before the trip, their inexperience still shows in their work. Even with the assistance of the instructors, there are a few teams that slowed the progress, so dinner was served very late. The entrance of the forest was filled with tents just like a camping zone. There are torches all around, illuminating the dark corner of the forest. As part of their training program, the second years are assigned guard and patrol duties. With so many charges, the instructors can’t take care of everyone, so the students are also posted as guards, which serve as practical assignments too. Eru’s team set up their tent faster than the other groups. Eru knows the steps well, and with the tall twins’ helping, they finished in no time. The two of them helped the other groups after finishing, while Eru walked to the outer edge of the camp site. The basics are all done. I am not being lazy... ah, found it. Beside the camping ground of the middle school students is the base of the high school Knight runners, and their Silhouette Knights. The footsteps of the Silhouette Knights and the hum of their internal components will disrupt the sleep of the campers. That’s why they are stationed here in case of any emergencies. The ten Silhouette Knights are arranged in rows, in standby mode with one knee on the ground. Their colossal figures are partially illuminated by the camp fire. With some parts hidden in the darkness, they look more imposing at night. Normal people might feel intimidated, but Eru simply smiled as he looked at the rows of iron giants seated in a row. Ah, giant robots are great— this is the oasis of the heart, every home should have one. There are no such terrifying families even in this world. But regretfully, no one is around to retort Eru. “Hey, you there... silver hair? Is that Ernesti?” After a short moment, someone called out to Eru who was immersed in a mysterious healing aura of robots. He turns back and saw the owner of Earlecumber — Edgar. “Evening Edgar-senpai. Sorry to disturb you.” “So it is you. Why are... I guess it is

pointless to ask.” Eru is famous in pilot school. His antics and motivation are well known, too. “Is senpai on standby duty?” Edgar heard Eru’s query as the flickering light from the camp fire shined over them. He smile bitterly and shook his head. “No, we were deciding the order of the duty but... sigh, Di is making a scene as usual.” “Dietrich-senpai?” “Yes. Simply put, he was complaining about standby duty being a hassle. As Knight runners in their senior year of Laihiala Academy, protecting our juniors is an important mission... But as usual, his attitude is flippant.” He still has to carry out his task no matter how stubborn he is. But Dietrich still insists on nagging about it. “I don’t want to hear his complains, so I decided to change the mood and see these guys.” The two of them raise their head to look at ‘them’. The campfire lit up the giant knight in white armour — Silhouette Knight Earlecumber. It was not customised and retained its original shape. Its simple design has no special features and has a gentle feel about it. With the top pilot Edgar controlling it, the two partners are known as the strongest in pilot school.



“Senpai likes Silhouette Knights. too?” “Eh? Rather than like... they are my weapon and comrades. My mood will calm down when I am with them. When I feel frustrated, like just now or when I feel tired, I will visit them.” I am probably not suited for this kind of talk — Edgar scratched his head. “I think having a reliable companion is wonderful.”

“You really like Silhouette Knights. That’s right, if you continue to work hard as a knight, you will gain a partner too... Ah, we talked for too long, first years should get back before it gets too late.” And so, they bid their farewell and returned. “...Okay, De should have calmed down by now.” After watching the bright silver disappear into the darkness, Edgar mumbles to himself, and prepares to head back with the spirit of heading into battle. The sky is totally dark. The first years finished their late dinner in the dim lights and returned to their tents. The first years have no assignments for the night. After the long journey and setting up camp, fatigue sets in and they wrap themselves in their blankets and sleep. When they have gone into slumber— A loud howl from a beast came from deep within the forest. It was probably wolves. After the first howl, howls in response can be heard from all over the forest. The students on guard duty heighten their senses and look towards the forest. The howls can be heard every now and then, so they lost interest in it after a while. But there are some who can’t ignore the howls. It reminds the first timer the situation they are in. This is not a safe town for a carriage they can run away on. This is right in front of the forest where Demon beasts lurk, they are sleeping in tents that were erected here. Even though Cloquet’s Forest is not really dangerous, it is not considered safe even with the students on watch. After arriving here without incident, they felt the atmosphere was on the way here, but grew tense because of the howling. Their sleepiness because of fatigue is gone and they are wide awake. In Eru’s team tent, Chid is shaking his head while lying down. Although he is not very affected, Chid still felt a bit uneasy and can’t sleep. I thought I was braver than this, seems like I am quite tense too. The dim camp fire shines in, giving the dark tent an unsettling atmosphere. Chid suddenly wondered if Eru, sleeping besides him was uneasy like him and called out softly. “Hey Eru, I want to ask... Eh.” Eru was fast asleep. He was not totally unmoved, but he was a warrior on the frontlines of hell in his previous life, too. He understood the importance of rest even if he doesn’t want too, and gained the ability to be able to sleep under any circumstances. ... Although I have known from the beginning, but he is too strong and carefree. After hearing Chid, Ady who couldn’t sleep turns and stares at Eru’s sleeping face. “Eh, how cunning.” Chid doesn’t know what she means by cunning. Ady shifted over and pulls Eru into her arms, hugging him like a pillow. Eru woke after being hugged this way. He realised it is Ady, and he pats her head and falls asleep. Maybe Ady felt safe because of this and her breathing turns smooth after a moment. Looking at the two of them, Chid felt foolish for not being able to sleep. Isn’t it stupid for me to be tense by myself? That’s it, he decided to not worry anymore. After a while, he enters dreamland. The next morning, the students start getting up some time after dawn. A lot of student didn’t get enough sleep. In the drowsy atmosphere, Eru’s group was refreshed. There are always students who can’t sleep when camping, experiencing this tension is one of the objectives of this field trip. The instructors didn’t push the younger first years, so the content of job is rather relaxed. After

the students finished the simple breakfast made from preserved food, they gathered in groups by their grades under the commands of the teachers. After the teacher had given brief instructions, the second years break into teams and headed for the depth of the forest. The prime objective of this field trip is to engage in practical battles with the Demon beast lurking in the forest, and to hunt for a certain number of them. The first years will head to the outer region of the forest, and may have to fight if necessary. The first years were tense as they enter the forest for the first time, while the other grades had to bear a different sort of tension, as they headed into the forest. After a moment, the sound of their armour grows softer as they move further in and the forest turns quiet once again. And so, this long day that all students in the Knighthood faculty will never forget begins.

Knights & Magic - Volume 1 - Chapter 7

A physical phenomenon forms out of thin air with a screech, and flies towards the 'Staccato Lizard'. The spell 'Aero Ripper' slices through the Staccato Lizard's neck, killing it before it can scream. "A lizard is heading this way! Vanguard, ready your shields!" The group follows the clear command of the lady, students lightly equipped with wands and bows retreat to the rear, replaced by students in heavy armor. They form a row and a wall with their shields to fend off the swarming Demon beasts. The beasts that survived the onslaught of magic and arrows pounce on the student in the front row with a fierce collision. The students used their shields to repel the claws and fangs of the Demon beast, and counter attack with their swords, taking down a large number of beasts. But the Demon beast use their superior numbers to bypass the iron wall defense and to their back. The lightly armored students on stand by, behind the vanguards will attack when they see any beast slip past their defenses. No Demon beast will make it through this formation. The middle school students who split into groups when they entered Cloquet's Forest gathered and formed into a single unit, positioning themselves into a formation that focuses on defense. The surge of Demon beasts charged at them from the depths of the forest. The students took on the waves of Demon beasts courageously. They put down one Demon beast after another, but the torrent of Demon beasts is just on the tip of the iceberg. Some beasts slipped through the defense of the edge of the formation, and file towards the forest entrance. "If this goes on, the first year at the forest entrance will be attacked...! We have to warn them!" The female student in command realised the danger and wants to warn the group behind them, but they have another impending crisis. "Watch out! A Macehead Ogre is coming at us!" The student who saw the Ogre screams. They were warding off small sized enemies like Staccato Lizards and Saber Cats, which is manageable despite their troubling numbers. But Macehead Ogre is a different ball game. Similar to its name, Macehead Ogre is a three metre tall giant ape with a head full of short and thick horns. It requires the teamwork of several students to fight on par with just one of them. They can't take on this enemy while engaging the horde of small Demon beasts. "...! Second file! Aim for the ape's leg! It will be bad if they draw near!" Several staff sticks out from the student acting as the defensive wall, casting all sorts of spells. They used fire, wind and lightning magic to battle the Demon beasts. We need to turn back time a few hours to understand why the situation is so dire. Morning, the middle school students from the higher grades headed into Cloquet's Forest in teams with high spirits. They kept their guard up, advancing deep into the forest with no resistance and realised that something was wrong. Normally, they would have met with several Demon beast attacks this deep into the forest, but there had been nothing so far. There was no news of the Demon beast disappearing from Cloquet's Forest. The groups hesitantly loiter around the forest, attempting to reach other teams for news. But all of the groups reported the absence of Demon beast encounters, with no signs of cats or lizards. Finding no trace of

the things that should be there is an abnormal sign, so the crowd decides to report back to the teachers after a short discussion. As they were preparing to leave, the Demon beasts started to emerge from left and right. It is a bit of a hassle, but they still raise their arms to destroy the Demon beasts. 1, 2— 5— 10— When the Demon beasts numbered in the dozens, everyone's expression changed. Seeing the state the forest is in, they understood that this is another abnormal event, differing from the one they experienced just now. But thankfully, they were all gathered so they have the strength in numbers, a silver lining of this gloomy situation. With their years of experience in Knighthood combat training, the students formed ranks with a formation made for large groups. This is the result of the students who aspire to join an Order of Knights, displaying the fruits of their hard work. And thus, their group clashes head on with the swarm of Demon beasts and this brings us to the present situation. This is the tenth Macehead Ogre they have defeated. The tactics of prioritising ranged attack is working. They judged that staying put will wear them down, so they retreated towards the forest entrance slowly. It was fortunate that the Student Council President, Stefania Serrati, is present. When they split into team activities, she assigned the task and suitable equipment to each group. It was the same for their combined formations; everyone has their role to play. Although they are a pick-up group, things are going well. The problem is the lack of a commander. It is great just following their given task, but if they don't act when there is an opportunity, they will miss the chance to take advantage of a situation and waste their resources. Under these circumstances, no one objects when the Student Council President, who is in her senior year step up as the commander. She has the nominal title as well as the grades, and was trusted by everyone. Even if this is a pick-up group cobbled together on a whim, her instructions were clear and led the group through difficult situation well. Their retreat was orderly and casualties was low, but— ... This is bad. The number of Demon beasts is a problem, but why are they so adamant about charging us... How much longer can we hold them? Stefania appeared calm when she commands, but she was frantic inside. They still have a lot of stamina and mana, but they will be overwhelmed if this keeps up. We didn't intercept all the Demon beasts. I hope the children behind us are safe...! The situation is deteriorating, but they still fought on. The first years training at the outer edge of the forest was attacked while the higher grade students were battling. In the beginning, the students near the forest screamed. Several Staccato Lizards pounce on the students and bit them. Their attacks weren't fatal, but it is dangerous if a bunch of them strikes together. The instructors rescued them immediately, attacking the Demon beasts that were targeting the students. The results of the instructors' actions made the situation worse, but they are not at fault. It will be fine if it was just a few Demon beasts, but the Demon beasts started to emerge en masse. The teachers missed the chance to fall back and had to keep on fighting. They are holding up well, but the students behind them fell into a panic with the emergence of more Demon beasts. The instructors who are supposed to maintain order can't draw back and give the students the proper instructions. The students recklessly waved their staff and cast spells. Their blindly casted magic did not threaten the beasts, almost hitting allies instead. Some drew their swords without thinking about the other students that are near them, causing further panic. Compared to the higher grade students, who were prepared and equipped for battle, and had plenty of practical experience, the first years were not ready for a fight. "...Aero Damned, Canister Shot!" Suddenly, someone leap over the panicking first year students. Silver hair shined brightly under the

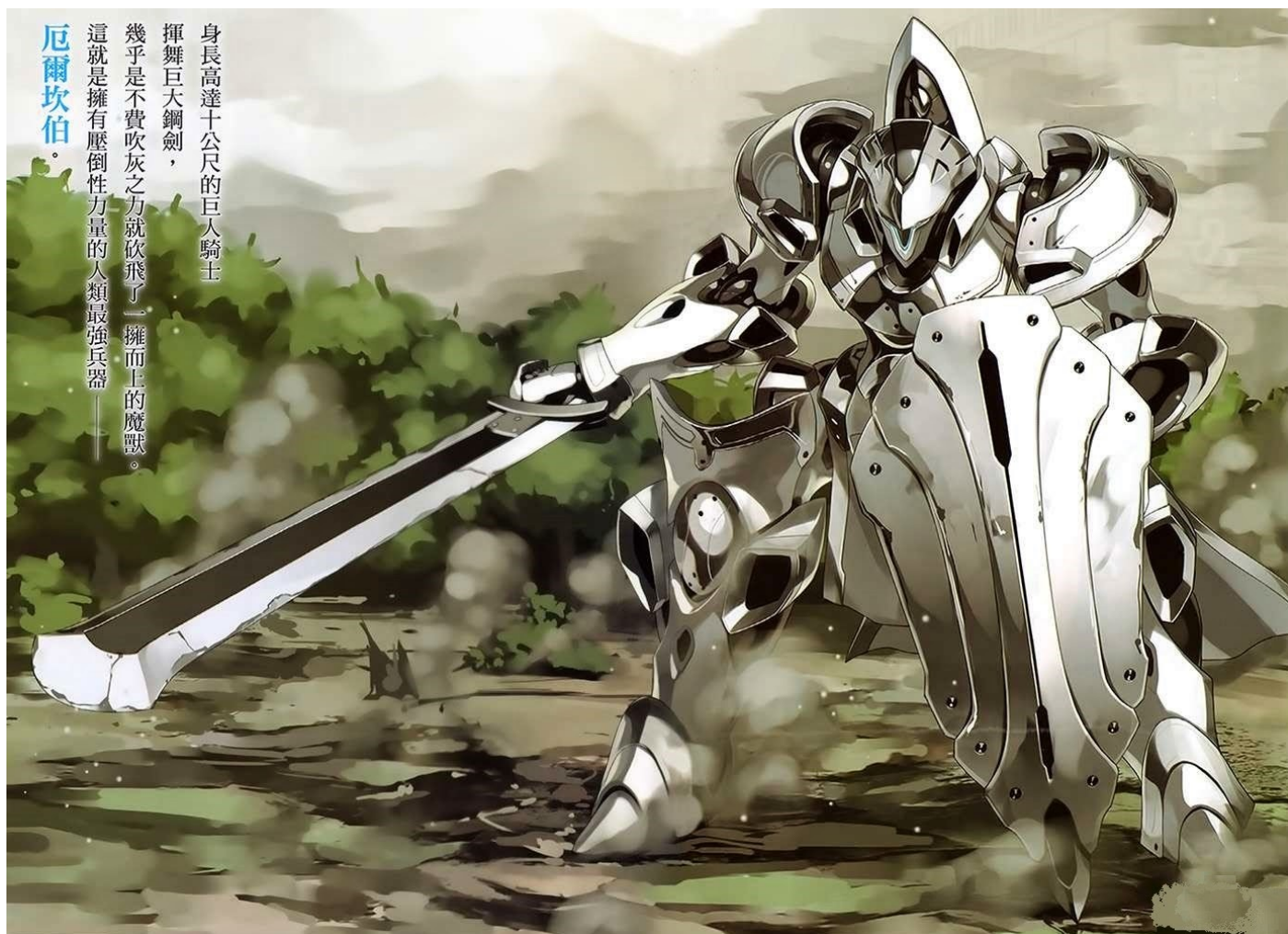
sun, this image burns deeply into the eyes of the confused students. That person flips in mid air, aimed for the ground and shot out several air bullets. Canister shot meant casting several spells at the same time like a shotgun. The air bullets hit the ground with the sound of an explosion. The compressed air bullets squeeze the face of the beasts together before blasting the Demon beasts and the ground away. Carpet bombing is a large aerial bombing done in a progressive manner to inflict damage in every part of a selected area of land. The phrase evokes the image of explosions completely covering an area; in the same way that a carpet covers a floor. The merciless magic destroyed a large amount of Demon beast through carpet bombing. Two more students move in from the left and right. One of them charges into the Demon beast mob with a big bastard sword in hand. He used physical boost to swing his giant sword, slicing the Demon beasts in half. He used the momentum to turn his body, drawing another weapon from his waist and point it at the surviving beast.

<TL: wikipedia.org/wiki/Carpet_bombing> “Too naive! Sonic Boom!” This weapon—gun staff Gandiva produces a vacuum from its tip, forming an air current rushing towards the Demon beasts, hitting those that were outside his sword range. Their bodies twisted unnaturally and were blown away. A girl showed up beside him, holding two bayonet staff pointed at different beasts. “Riot Sparrow!” Lightning fell, accompanied by the sound of thunder the next second, striking the gathered Demon beasts. She didn’t even look at the beasts that spasmed and died, attaching the gun staff onto the sword in her sheath. She held the dual swords in both hands, slashing at every Demon beast that came within range. Even a thin sword can cut Demon beasts in half if it is strengthened by magic. The three students attacked like a storm, reducing the number of beast drastically. The pressure from the approaching swarm lessened, giving everyone a chance to catch their breath. The students’ moment stopped not because of the chaos, but from the shock of seeing the one-sided massacre. “Draw your staff.” The short student who leapt over the crowd stood in front of them, and issued an order. The young, tender voice that sounded as pleasant as a bird, had an air of authority, making everyone follow his instructions. “Everyone gather up, form into tight ranks. Teacher!” The dumbfounded instructors finally came to their senses. “Please take command and keep the initiative. Please retreat, the three of us will support the others.” The teachers started giving out instructions hurriedly. The students formed a tight formation and strengthen their defense. For first year students with inferior combat abilities to fight Demon beasts, they will need to concentrate their firepower. Although it is still a bit flimsy, the teachers commanding them can handle it. Ernesti stared at the Demon beasts rushing out of the forest and slowly raises his Winchester. Chid and Ady stood beside him like his guards. Chid leaned the bastard sword on his shoulder with one hand, and grabbed a Gandiva with the other, while Ady rested the tips of her dual swords in her hands, on the ground. Their eyes are full of determination when they see the swarm of Demon beasts before them. “Hey, aren’t those numbers a bit too much. Oh well, we can wreck havoc if more of them comes!” “Hmmp— I won’t hold back!” Eru reigned in the spirited twins. “It’s fine if the both of you want to fight, but don’t forget about the rest of the student body.” “Eh—? They can take care of themselves... probably...” Ady wanted to protest, but stopped midway, because Eru was staring at her with a stern expression. “You don’t need to stay here if you just want to wreck havoc.” “Uguu, I... I get it! I will help them!” Chid raised his hands in surrender. “Fortunately, this is still the entrance of the forest. We can get back to the campsite if we retreat. If we meet up with

the Silhouette Knights there, things will lighten up. Before that..." Eru casted an Aero Damned as he spoke. The Demon beast that wanted to attack them while they were talking was sent flying. "We need to protect them." Eru made up his mind, lifted Winchester and shot out a string of spells. While the middle schoolers are in the forest, the high schooler Knight runners were relieved from their duty and started their training. Since they cannot increase the stress on the machines, as the Silhouette Knights have to be conserved for escort duties, their training centred on one on one spars. Edgar was in the midst of sword swinging practice when he heard noises that shouldn't appear from the forest. "Hey, isn't the forest rather noisy?" "Hmm?" The moment he brought it up, the students around him perk up their ears. Sounds of tremours that weren't there before came from the direction of the forest, and they knew what it was. "That sound of explosions... magic!?" "Something is up... Exercise cease! Pilots prepare to sortie. The situation in the forest seems to be bad, scout out the situation!" The group in the camp moved hurriedly. The Knightsmiths working on the Silhouette Knights' withdraw to let the pilots mount. They skipped the initialisation check and let the machines stand up, drowning their surroundings with the sound of the churning ether reactor. But they couldn't send all the machines out, so only five Silhouette Knights were dispatched into the forest. "Hey, look at that..." The scale of the crisis was beyond their imagination. Swarms of Demon beasts were charging at them before they entered the forest, the numbers were more than they had ever seen. The beast's shrieked as they charged in all directions. "What... What is happening?" "The Demon beasts are going out of control? Are the brats in trouble!?" They drew their swords and advance into the forest. They linked up with the first years in no time. The first years has successfully retreated with Eru's quick thinking. They bundled together, retreating slowly as they casted magic to restrict the Demon beasts' movements. The beasts that rushed at the formation will be repelled by magic. Edgar move in to support them, piloting Earlecumber as a shield in front of the first years. The tense first years breathed a sigh of relief when they saw the Silhouette Knights appear and dispose of the Demon beasts. The strongest combat units of humanity — the Silhouette Knights are trusted by the populace. Especially at the scene of a Demon beast's raid, their power to match a hundred Demon beasts provided a great sense of security. They retreated to the campsite, setting up fences around the area to fortify their defenses. With the Silhouette Knights taking charge of defense, the instructors and the high school Knight runners began to discuss their plan of action. There's enough defense to protect the first years, so that isn't an issue. Their main worry lies with the higher grade students who delved deep into the forest. "Do you know the routes taken by the second and third years?" "That is hard to say. Because this was meant to be a practical session, the area of operation is the whole forest, and there is no guarantee they will stay in the assigned location." The instructors reviewed the action plan of each higher grade student and groaned with a serious expression. They wanted to rescue them, but with the limited number of Silhouette Knights, they don't know where to start. Cloquet's Forest was vast, running around like a headless chicken will be counter intuitive. But they didn't have time to hesitate either. At this point, Ernesti stick his head out from the instructor's side. "Where are the places in the forest that people can gather easily?" "Hmm? That... if they want to rendezvous, it should be nearby." The teacher was surprised by Eru's sudden question, but still answered him. It was meaningless to discuss this with a first year, but with his spectacular performance earlier, no one felt that Eru's intrusion was out of place. "With the scale of the Demon beast horde, won't the seniors

group up to resist? That's why I think we should look for places where large group of people can gather." "Hmm... You have a point." "The Silhouette Knights can't move easily in heavily forested areas. Taking our combat assets into consideration, we should start our search from open spaces, right?" The map sprawled out on the table was marked with red lines showing the routes of advancement. To reach the designated areas, they would have to cut through the centre of the forest. "Also, you can take out the Demon beasts coming this way if you use this route. If anyone is caught in a battle, just holler and you will be fine." Because this was an emergency, everyone accepted Eru's proposal, and formed a team to rescue the higher grade students. The campsite needed guards, so only half of the machines were deployed — five Silhouette Knights. Edgar who was the pilot of the pure white Silhouette Knight – Earlecumber, was the first to volunteer. As he was getting inside Earlecumber, someone called out to him. Edgar turned back and saw Eru standing there. "Can I go, too?" "Why?" "The family members of my friends are also in the forest. They are worried, so I want to join the search if possible." Edgar felt troubled. Although it is dangerous, it shouldn't be a problem with Eru's combat ability. And with the rational discussion he displayed during the conference, it will be helpful to bring him along. Edgar agreed after thinking about it. Earlecumber let Eru stand on his hand and stood up. Behind him is Helvi in Trandorches and three other machines. They entered the forest with heavy steps. "Those who have depleted your mana, help the wounded! Front line switch with standby line! Hold the line, everyone just hold on a little longer!" Their mana were exhausted and they are panting hard. They try to stabilise their breathing as they continue to defeat the unending torrent of Demon beasts. The higher grade students protect their wounded as they continue to retreat from the forest. It has been several hours since the battle begun, their retreat has been difficult. They are fine with handling the beast one at a time, but when a huge wave swells up and attack, they are forced to deplete their stamina. The Macehead Ogre that shows up from time to time drains their mana. Because they can't cast powerful enough spells as they lack mana, a Macehead Ogre managed to close in on them and cause serious damage. About half of the group is in the state of mana depletion or have been wounded, their forces are dwindling. They conserve their remaining stamina and keep switching the vanguard to hold the up the battle front. But they don't know how much longer they can last; they are close to the campsite, which is the only hope that kept them going. But reality is cruel. Two Macehead Ogres appeared dead ahead — They are so agitated that they are foaming at the mouth, charging straight at the group. Compared to the beginning of the battle, the magic at their disposal are much weaker, so the students couldn't stop them. The vanguards frown. The sole Macehead Ogre that attacked earlier wiped out over a dozen students, inflicting heavy casualties. If they take on two at the same time, they might be wiped out. Stefania who is in command knows this very well. On top of giving out commands, she has moved to the front line with her staff in hand. She has gone through all sorts of possibilities while fighting, but they don't have the combat prowess to break away from the encirclement. The group is reaching the limit of their physical and mana reserves. They can't muster the strength to defeat the Ogres even if they wanted to. The Macehead Ogre has an endurance that matches its tough appearance. They advanced steadily, making light of the desperate struggles of the students. The chaotic attacks served to agitate them instead, making them more excitable. "This is it..." Someone mumbled this softly. The Macehead Ogre who was right before them raised their fist, aiming for the head of a vanguard. The vanguard

raised their shields, even though it is in vain. That's why he didn't understand what happened when he heard the sound of a dull explosion over his head. He didn't see several Piercing Lances flying over his head with incredible accuracy, hitting the arm of the Macehead Ogre dead on. He also missed seeing the Piercing Lance exploding one by one in accordance to its script, blowing the Ogre's arm away. By the time the vanguard composed himself, the Ogre was running away, yelping. Following immediately was something that is beyond his imagination — the one which came flying wasn't just the magic projectile, but the caster himself — Ernesti, who rush in like a silver bullet. This was a literal description, as Eru was conjuring 'Aero Thrust' to accelerate as he was leaping, just like a bullet. He used the momentum to catch up with the limping Ogre who lost its arm, slashing off its head with a Sonic Blade. The head flew into the air and the massive body collapsed. Eru landed with enough force to dig into the ground, turns his head as he slides and pointed his Winchester at the other Macehead Ogre. Fireball was rapidly cast from its tip, engulfing the Ogre an explosion that shakes the ground. Half of the Ogre's body was charred and falls. "Now... Now's the chance! Kill it!" Stefania was stunned by Eru's sudden intrusion into the battlefield, but she didn't let the chance slip away. Her command made the students move, finishing off the Ogre. "... Eru..." "Sorry for the wait, Student Council President. I brought reliable reinforcements." Without needing Eru to show her, she could hear heavy footfalls behind. The rescue team overtakes the higher grade students, spreading out in front and protecting them. The ten metre tall giant Knights swung its gigantic iron sword, easily wiping out a wave of Demon beasts, this was the overwhelming strength of humanity's strongest weapon. The students erupted in cheers at the sight of the powerful Silhouette Knights. There are no reinforcements more reassuring for the group on the verge of defeat. They are safe.



厄爾坎伯。

身長高達十公尺的巨人騎士
揮舞巨大鋼劍，
幾乎是不費吹灰之力就砍飛了一擁而上的魔獸。
這就是擁有壓倒性力量的人類最強兵器——

“... Well, well, bringing Ernesti along was the right choice.” Edgar who was riding inside Earlecumber mumbles to himself, as he drives the Demon beasts away. They followed Eru’s suggestion and searched for places with wide open spaces. They discovered the higher grade students shortly after advancing in that direction. That is because the students are bunched together and ready to retreat. But they were in a crisis when Edgar found them, the Macehead Ogres were about to break through the formation. They can take down the Demon beasts easily with the Silhouette Knight’s power, but they are too far away. They will also hit the students if they use the Silhouette arms. Frustrated with his inability to help, despite having the strength to do so, Edgar grinded his teeth in regret. At this moment, Ernesti who is in the hand of Earlecumber charged ahead. The Ogres fell easily before the rampaging Eru, making Edgar sigh. His performance is shameful when compared to Eru. With the Silhouette Knights who made it in the nick of time as escorts, the students continue to retreat. There are many injuries, but no one was lost and everybody made it back to the campsite in one piece. This happened slightly after the Laihiala Pilot Academy student body left Jantunen for Cloquet’s Forest. A Silhouette Knight passed by the convoy and arrives at the eastern gate of Jantunen. This is probably urgent as the exhausted Knight runner approached the Knights after reaching the gate. The Knights were stunned by the sudden turn of events, but their faces turned pale after receiving the report of the pilot and hastily informed their commander. “Is... this true!?” Commander of Jantunen garrison Knights — Philip Hallhagen’s expression changed after hearing the report from his subordinate. The vice-commander, Gottfried Hyvärinen, who was also in the commander’s office was expressionless, but his face is white. This showed the impact this report gave them. “Yes sir! Stronghold Balguerie was

decimated under the attack of the battalion level Demon beast — Land Emperor. It is likely the defending team has been wiped out. Behemoth is moving west into the heart of the Kingdom, and is expected to show up around Jantunen soon. Sir!” Battalion level Demon beast’s sudden attack makes Philip’s head ache like a nightmare. But the commander has no time to waste. It is fortunate a Knight runner brought this news to him, giving him some buffer time to prepare for the Behemoth to appear. Every second is precious. “Issue emergency orders, muster all the Knights near Jantunen! This order overrides any mission they are currently undertaking!” They orderly repeated his given orders, salute and sprinted out immediately. Philips and Gottfried dash out as if they were chasing after him, and head towards the war council room. “A Behemoth... Even Jantunen doesn’t have a battalion, only the Capital can match that.” “The categorisation is only a guideline. Even with our forces, we can take it down if we are prepared for major losses.” Philip clenched his fist as he moved hurriedly. “I know, but the problem is the scale of the losses! It’s meaningless to blindly sacrifice the hundred Silhouette Knights in our garrison! Jantunen will be left defenseless!” Gottfried was quiet after hearing this. He did not wish to risk the destruction of their band of Knights, but Behemoth has already ravaged a stronghold. If Jantunen suffers heavy collateral damage, the trade routes of the Kingdom will be heavily congested. If the supplies to the frontlines are cut off, it will adversely affect the fortresses, leading to more catastrophes. This could determine the fate of the entire nation; they have to kill the Behemoth even if it takes the lives of the entire Knight company. Gottfried had to offer his advice if necessary, that is his duty as the vice-commander. “...No, there is no time to discuss this. If we don’t stop it here, the entire kingdom might fall. Send an envoy to the Capital, they will need to send a replacement company of Knights after we fall...” Seeing Philip’s face twist with worry, Gottfried can only nod in silence. All the Knights on duty were already there when Philip entered the war council room. All of them wore anxious expressions because of the impending crisis. The Knights outside the city received a call order, so they had to assess the situation before all the Knights return. A map was prepared, and the possible advancement route of the Behemoth was highlighted. The Knight runner who sent the warning didn’t know the current position of the Behemoth either, so they had to factor in things such as terrain and the mobility of the Behemoth to predict its advancement route, and estimate its rough position. They will also need to decide where they will fight the Behemoth. “From the direction it is headed and the terrain around stronghold Barkley, the most possible route is around D’Aiguebelle Mountains, through the forest at the foot of the mountain.” “That is right beside Jantunen... Its current estimated position?” The Knight who was asked pointed to the map. “I think it passed through Crepel Plains and is about to enter Cloquet’s Forest.” “Cloquet’s Forest... Uguu, that’s closer than I thought. If we are going to intercept it, we will need to do it somewhere closer to Jantunen...” A Knight behind him suddenly shouts. “Did you say Cloquet’s Forest...!?” “What? What’s wrong with Cloquet’s Forest?” No one wanted to listen to bad news, but they needed to keep tabs on elements that could affect them. Before the watchful eyes of everyone, the Knight announce with a pale face. “... Laihiala Academy is conducting a field trip there right now!” “Wha...!?” All the Knights present are speechless. Not only Jantunen, even citizens who are the assets of the nation, as well as the children are in danger. There are Knights in the room who has relatives studying at Laihiala Knighthood school right now. Some of the Knights approached Philip frantically. “We need to go to Cloquet’s Forest!” “We have to

save the children!" Philip was troubled with the accumulating problems, but he did not consider it for long. Another mission takes priority. "...Send out messengers, but the company will stay put until we have gathered enough forces." "Commander! Are you forsaking them!?" "Nonsense!" Philip roared at the Knights who were pestering him, his voice filled with anguish. "I want to help them too, but with our current forces, we will need to give everything to take down the Behemoth!... I am not optimistic about the coming battle. Striking now without mustering the whole company will just be wasting our forces, we might even be wiped out by the Behemoth. Don't be mistaken! Our objective is to defeat the Behemoth, defend Jantunen and safeguard the entire Fremmevira Kingdom!" The rowdy Knights quietened down. They also understood that they have no say in this. "... What we can do now is to have faith in their luck and wits..." They looked into the darkness in the direction of Cloquet's Forest. The entrance of Cloquet's Forest, Laihiala Knighthood school campsite. After the upper grade students in middle school retreated successfully, a simple fence was erected alongside the Silhouette Knights, forming a simple line of defense. Most Demon beasts emerging from the forest are about one metre in height, the largest being three metres tall. Their combat capabilities are insignificant compared to the ten metre tall Silhouette Knights. They swat away clusters of beasts with a single sword swing. But there are a few that sneak past because of the large difference in size. They swarm towards the fence, and are held off by the students who move in to fill the gap. From the Demon beast's view point, the Silhouette Knight who seems to be flaunting its existence is intimidating. Unwilling to face them, the beasts flank the Silhouette Knights, attacking the base camp from either side. The middle schoolers in the higher grades suffered many casualties, so this is a favorable situation for the Knighthood students who lack the manpower. After the sun sets beyond the mountains, the attack came to an end. The students, who are alert even with the absence of enemies instinctively felt that the battle was over and takes a breather. "Is the Demon beast stampede over?..." Stefania Serrati, who felt fatigue from the depth of her heart was relieved. She was leading the able bodied student body to the very end. They met up with the teachers back at the base camp, but they judged that it will be easier for Stefania, who has been commanding from the very beginning to continue. But part of it was because of her sense of responsibility. "Chid, Ady... Eru." When the situation has calmed down, she greeted the students, who were resting and surveyed the campsite. She called out to the familiar faces loudly when she came across them. "Ah, Onee-sama... Are you okay? I heard the student body was in trouble!" Stefania shakes her head. "As you can see, I am doing well. Enough about me, you guys were reckless out there." Stefania looked amazed as she spoke. The students who just retreated back to camp were riddled with wounds and fatigue, so their combat capabilities were minimal. They will struggle to handle the Demon beasts that sneak pass the Silhouette Knights in their current state. But thanks to Eru buying time for them, they managed to recover and made it through. "We were the only ones who can still fight, so we went a little overboard." "I think the three of you are as effective as a platoon, and that is not going 'a little overboard'... Sigh, never mind. More importantly... Eru!" Stefania approached Eru, who was standing behind the two of them and hugged him. She didn't care about Eru, who was surprised and couldn't resist, and rubbed her face on that silky, smooth hair of his. "Ah~~ this healing♪~~ I can keep fighting if Eru is here." Stefania-senpai... Can't be helped. I will give her some reward for her hard work. If my sacrifice can improve her mood, then, this is nothing. Stefania

happily played with his hair and poked his cheeks, Eru did not resist, and allowed her to toy with him. Ady seemed angry, but didn't stop her. Stefania enjoyed herself with the cuddling for a long while. Suddenly an awkward voice called her from behind. "Eh... Student Council President..." The student was looking for her, but was surprised at how creepy Stefania's smile was. This was expected as Stefania was leading the student body coolly earlier, but is now hugging a junior with a lewd smile. "What is it?" "The teacher is asking for you to discuss our next move." "I understand. Sorry you three. Let's chat later, it will just take a little while." It was too late to cover it up, but Stefania didn't seem to mind, changing to Student Council President mode immediately. The three of them waved at her with an amazed expression as Stefania leaves. Alright, we made it past the dangerous period, but what's next? They made it through the stampede of the Demon beasts, but Eru didn't think that things are over just yet. He looked back at Cloquet's Forest, which seems to be growing darker, as if it wants to mask itself from Eru's sight. Even Eru is not sure what was lurking deep within the forest. "And so, we are moving out tomorrow?" The instructors are unable to come to a consensus for their next course of action. This is understandable as they have not grasped the whole picture. Anyway, they had informed everyone of their course of action over dinner. Eru and the others drank the soup made from simple vegetables and the food they brought along, while they confirm their circumstances. "Correct, we have many wounded but no one is in danger of dying, the worst of it are just fractures. There are many who have depleted their mana and are exhausted. The teachers feel that it is dangerous to move with our inadequate fighting power." "Yes, but isn't it dangerous to rest here?" "The horses will also be affected by the dark. The instructors decided that being attacked while exhausted and moving on the carriages will be too risky, it is better to wait for day break while taking advantage of the base camp's defenses. I think we won't be attacked by Demon beasts in such numbers any time soon." "Oh— what an optimistic view." "Not really, all the options are like a gamble, this is simply choosing the safest option. If something does come in the middle of the night, it will be easier for the Silhouette Knight to defend if we stay put." What they can do now is to rest up, detect danger early and react to the situation. In the end, they have to depend on themselves. After dinner, they try to relax and shake off their tense emotions, and put their hopes in making it to Jantunen when morning comes. But they missed an important thing— What created the stampede? They didn't notice that the Demon beasts heading their way were desperate, as if something was chasing them to the west. They only regret missing this detail during the twilight hours just before dawn. The red sun rises slowly over the mountain range. The students, who took the last shift suppressed their drowsiness and yawns. The surrounding is peaceful. After meeting the large scale migration of the Demon beasts, there were almost no Demon beasts left in Cloquet's Forest. The whole forest seems to have died with a silent air. —And that silence was broken suddenly. They noticed the weird noise coming from the forest. The sound of trees breaking and falling appears to follow a rhythm. Something heavy seems to be hitting the ground. It didn't take long for them to realise what that meant, sounding the alarm immediately. "Oh shit! A big one! A big one is coming!" Both instructors and students who were sleeping jumped out of bed when the alarm sounded. They didn't sleep well because of the tension, so everyone was moving once they got up. The high school Knight runners, who are dragging their tired bodies to perform their standby duties, mount their Silhouette Knights, activating them immediately to guard the entrance to the forest. The

sound of trees falling can be heard clearly now, along with the thundering footsteps. It is clear that something big is approaching. “Hey, isn’t this bad?” It goes without saying that everyone can feel that this is a crisis like never before. In this intense atmosphere, everyone’s eyes are drawn towards the forest entrance. There is no Demon beast larger than duel-level in Cloquet’s Forest, that was the reason it was chosen for the field trip. But the footfalls of the approaching beast tells us how large it is. It was a large Demon beast that shouldn’t appear in Cloquet’s Forest. The swarms of Demon beasts that attacked them out of nowhere. The Demon beast wave was so large, as if the whole forest was rushing out. Could it be that they were chased out by the intruding colossal beast? The trees near the entrance fell like dominoes. Finally, the Demon beast appeared with the light of the breaking dawn. It was covered in uneven armour with protruding edges. It was easily mistaken for a mountain, and humanity’s strongest weapon, the Silhouette Knight looked as weak as a child in contrast. Its eyes that are disproportionately small scan the area before it. Everyone was awestruck, feeling fearful and weak before its majesty. Land Emperor — the colossal beast that appeared at the border of the nation is now advancing dangerously close to Jantunen. An abnormal silence enclosed this space. It spurns from the tension between the Demon beast and the people present. The humans on scene, Laihiala’s students, are awed by the gargantuan sized Behemoth and can’t move. The elite Knights posted at the frontlines were also stunned when they saw the Behemoth; it is too much to ask fifteen year old students to find enough courage to stand up to it. During the moment when time seemed to freeze, the Behemoth moved first with its calmer mind-set. It looked around, opened its mouth and howled. Instead of sound, it felt closer to a shock wave moving through the air. Its horrifying lung capacity released a roar that made the earth tremble, shattering several trees close to it. The armour of the Silhouette Knights closest to it shivers, and it took a few steps backwards because of the pressure. The sound is so loud that the students had curled up in a ball, cupping their ears; some even fainted from the shock wave. This is the signal that undid their bindings. When they started moving, the silence before was just like an illusion. Everyone is running away from the Demon beast as if they were being pushed back. This is not because they have come to their senses, but the chaotic actions due to their panic. The instructors lost control of the situation; everyone is just focused on running away from the Behemoth. Escaping is the best option under such circumstances, but the way they are doing it is bad. The range a human can travel on foot is limited; they need to run to the carriage if they want to escape further. The panic stricken students didn’t think about that, and just concentrated on getting away in any direction. Just as the group was dispersing, there was suddenly an explosion at the front. No matter how terrified the people are, they won’t run into an explosion. The student body’s movement stopped for an instant and a figure used this chance to jump in front of everyone. “Get away! Run! It’s dangerous! Everyone head for the carriage!” Following Eru’s lead, the few students who kept their wits shot out Fireball, preventing the group from spreading out. They attracted the attention of the students with spells, herding them towards the carriage like hunting guides. They are still far from being calm, but the group is stable enough to understand instructions. They run towards the carriage in order to escape from the Behemoth. The middle schoolers are not the only ones awed by the Behemoth, it was the same for the high school Knight runners. Because they are in possession of the powerful Silhouette Knights, the Behemoth is a bigger threat to them. With the responsibility that comes with this power, they can’t run away. Even if they

want to fight, the enemy is too strong. “Don’t stop! Move—!” Caught in a dilemma because of an enemy out of their league, the first to snap out of it is Edgar. Be it fight or flight, remaining still before the Behemoth is like suicide. The Knight runners finally recognise that the Behemoth is preparing to charge and tries to evade in a panic. The momentum of the beast is incomparable to anything in this world. Even a Silhouette Knight won’t stand a chance when facing one. The pilots break out in cold sweat, losing their will to fight. What can they do to fight this terrifying Demon beast? But one man, Edgar, suppressed his fear when he realised the advancement route of the Behemoth coincides with the carriages the middle schoolers are using to flee, and said with resolve: “I will distract the Behemoth! Everyone, please lend me your strength!” “Huh? Edgar! Do you know what you are saying!? That is a Behemoth! It will send all of us flying with a kick!” “I know! But our juniors will be wiped out if we let it rampage. No, not just that. It will assault Jantunen if it heads down the same way as the carriages!” Helvi who snapped at Edgar knows, too. There is nowhere to run, even if they escape from here, it will just lead to more collateral damage. She gritted her teeth with enough force to splinter it. “We have no choice but to go through with it...!” “We are Knights. We learnt swordsmanship and piloting in order to protect our Kingdom, how can we run without a fight!” Edgar equips magic armament onto Earlecumber as he spoke. The ether reactor is running the flow of mana activates the magic armament... the whole Silhouette Knight glows dimly. “I don’t want to die pointlessly either. We need to draw the Behemoth’s attention!” “Yes, there’s no other way!” Edgar didn’t want to lose the spirit he managed to squeeze out. Earlecumber led the charge, aiming at the Behemoth’s leg. “All units, draw staff! Use magic bombardment to draw its attention and pull back!” Edgar shouts as he pulls his control stick all the way back. Earlecumber channels its mana to the magic armament under the control of its pilot, lightning staff Arquebus. The tip of the simple longish weapon glows brightly, a lightning bolt strikes at the Behemoth with a flash. Unfortunately, the blast had no effect. One reason is the Behemoth is too big; the other factor is the electricity was directed towards the ground from the armoured shell without hurting the interior. The other three Silhouette Knights apart from Edgar has also armed themselves with magic armaments, circling around the Behemoth while firing their overed spells. It is hard to tell the effectiveness of the attacks, but they achieved their goal of getting the Behemoth’s attention. The Behemoth turns its head when it noticed the disturbance, looking at the Silhouette Knights casting spells at it with annoyed eyes. “How... It is ineffective...” “It’s fine! Don’t stop and run! We just need to buy some time!” The Knight runners understood the Behemoth is focusing on them, so they lure the Behemoth away from the middle schoolers and retreat at full speed. As the high school pilots battles the Behemoth, the middle schoolers are rushing onto the carriage. Because of the number of people, only about half of them has evacuated despite the carriages being dispatched one by one. There are still a lot of people left... we need more time, we can only depend on our seniors now... Eru stands at the end of the line, looking at the fight between the Behemoth and the Silhouette Knights with a grim expression. Using spells beyond human capabilities — overed spells are negated by the invulnerable armour shell, leaving no trace of injury. Before the colossal beast, even the crystallisation of human technology, the Silhouette Knights are insignificant. The Eru who is just one person is even more powerless. He has a serious face. The situation of the high school pilots is overwhelmingly bad... No, it is hopeless, their attacks does no damage at all. Their tactics

revolves around retreating, disrupting it with deft movements. The Silhouette Knights will fall with just a single hit because of the differences in mass. If the pilot continue to accumulate fatigue and stress — it is hard to think of a good outcome. I will evacuate everyone, so don't die senpai...! No matter how fast a Silhouette Knight is, there is no guarantee it can get out of the way of an angry, charging Behemoth. Hence, the other Knights will concentrate their attacks on the Behemoth to divert its attention, if it locks on to their comrades. Their attacks did not hurt the Behemoth, but it was frustrated with the annoyance. "Hahaha! Is that it, this thing is big, but can't do anything to us!" Dietrich shouted. In order to overcome the intimidating aura stemming from the gigantic body of the beast, he has to convince himself that he has the upper hand. It was meant to motivate himself, but because the tactics of stalling for time was working too well, they were taking things lightly. Could it be, this is a slow and dumb beast that is all bark with no bite? In actual fact, it will take just one hit to shatter a Silhouette Knight, but toying with the Behemoth this way has dulled their sense of judgment. For a short time, they seem to be successful in their bid to drag out the battle. The Behemoth that is chasing after the escaping Silhouette Knights slowed down suddenly. The pilots watched the Behemoth's changes, as it took a huge breath with a lung capacity appropriate to its colossal size, sucking in an illogical amount of air. The next second, a fierce breath of tornado shot out from its mouth. This is a ranged magic attack. The pilots who assumed the Behemoth can only charge and attack physically, were caught off guard by the sudden projectile spell. A tornado charged in a straight line. The turbulence from the current engulfed a machine that didn't get away in time. The Silhouette Knight couldn't resist the raging air currents which twisted its armour and squashed its crystal tissue. The ten metre tall mass of steel — the Silhouette Knight flew into the sky and fell heavily to the ground. The impact shatters the limbs which has the least durability, which breaks off from the torso. Because the Silhouette Knights are humanoid shaped, its tattered image burns deep into the heart of the pilots. "Hya! Ugu... Wah!" Dietrich saw the whole process clearly. His classmate, who has been with him through high school — and his Silhouette Knight was destroyed, making him scream as if his throat was in spasm. The next moment, another machine disappeared before Dietrich's eyes with a loud bang. He didn't understand what happened, but he gets it when he shifts his gaze. The Behemoth struck with its tail. The moment that machine stopped, it was hit by the tail which was swinging with inertia, flying out in a twisted lump. Dietrich is safe because of luck — his position was slightly out of range. He would have been swept by the tail if he was a couple of steps forward. Two Silhouette Knights were easily shattered like some pottery in the blink of an eye. The pilots realised how wrong they were to think they can hold the Behemoth off somehow. The Behemoth turns its head towards the surviving Silhouette Knights as if it was flaunting how easily it can destroy them. The perpetrator of the entire incident was targeting them next. "Wwwwaaaaahhhh!" "Oooorrrraaaaa!" The two sounds coincide with each other. The former was Dietrich screaming in horror, because of the Demon beast, the latter was Edgar, shouting to overcome the fear in his heart to steel himself. Damn! How can I be so careless! The Behemoth is a battalion level Demon beast... I knew it was a monster that cannot be handled by the handful of us! Edgar couldn't forgive himself for the loss of his comrade's life, because he underestimated the enemy. His anger is stronger than his fear, pushing him forward. "Everyone, avoid facing it head on! No matter what, evasion takes priority! Just a bit more, everyone, please hang on!" They had engaged the Behemoth,

everyone will be wiped out if they turn and run suddenly. After hearing Edgar's spirited voice, the other Knight runners responded to him, even though they are shivering with fear. All of them used everything they had to dodge the Behemoth's attack. Right now, they can only put their life on the line and keep pestering the Behemoth. Under the rampage of the Behemoth's magic, the high school pilots are forced into a dire situation. Eru and the others had safely evacuated the middle schoolers, and he hopped onto the last carriage himself. He watched the battle from the carriage, speeding away from the Behemoth. The high schoolers are at a severe disadvantage with the magic attack of the Behemoth, killing off any chance for them to run away, even if Eru and the rest had left. The conversation he had with Edgar flashed across his mind. Even if his message didn't reach them, the only thing he can do now is to give his support. At this moment, a red shadow appeared in the corner of Eru's eye. He turned his head quickly, and was shocked after he identified it. The red shadow was the Silhouette Knight, Guyale. Could it be... As he was thinking, he turned his head ahead and saw the battle still raging on between the Behemoth and the other Silhouette Knights. This means Guyale is abandoning the other students and escaping by himself. Eru jumped off the carriage when he understood this. Everyone was stunned by his action and couldn't stop him. He ran after Guyale with the speed of a bullet. A red Silhouette Knight was running in the bright forest under the sunny sky. The quiet forest extends all around it; there is nothing in the surroundings. But the red machine was focused on its task, sprinting hard as if it was being chased. In fact, the red Silhouette Knight Guyale and its pilot Dietrich Cunitz was pressed into this situation with no way to escape. What is driving Dietrich is pure terror. The image of his classmate's Silhouette Knight being crushed by the Behemoth repeats in his mind endlessly. Dietrich doesn't even dare to turn back, blindly pushing Guyale to sprint forward. Although he is not the one running, but his lungs are constricted because of fear and his breathing is irregular. Knight runners have absolute trust in their machines. There are Demon beasts which have power beyond the Silhouette Knights, but Dietrich didn't think they were invincible. He was not prepared to face an enemy that shrugged off attacks and can destroy Silhouette Knights in one hit. In the end, he panicked, and made the shameful choice of saving himself by sacrificing his classmates. But the goddess of fate did not let him off so easily. Guyale's speed suddenly dropped drastically. Although Dietrich was panicking, he immediately thought of a reason for this. He went through the battle earlier and sprinted at full speed. He didn't display the calmness he showed during his training, running hard in an inefficient manner. What awaits him is a dead battery. The fear that accompanied his immobility seizes Dietrich, but he could still do something about it. He stops Guyale and switch to standby mode to rest and recover his mana reserve. After confirming that the Behemoth is not pursuing him, he sighed in relief and steadied his rough breathing. After stopping, he gathered some of his wits and felt a strong pang of regret. He shakes his head to clear away this thoughts. But being unable to move, all sorts of thoughts emerged, pushing Dietrich into a corner. —That's right, I abandoned my comrades and ran— —Leaving your brother in arms behind, a shameful behaviour for Knights— So... So what! Staying there means dying in vain! I only chose to live, and the code of chivalry didn't say anything about dying for nothing! Dietrich denies the accusations of his own conscience. His calm breathing becomes rough again; he didn't even notice his hand holding the control stick is becoming stiff because he was gripping too hard. His eyes were wide open as he sweated profusely, and he continued to affirm and

deny his own thoughts. Dietrich, who was tormented by his own thoughts, heard a sound that drew closer into the distance and came to his senses. That is the screeching sound of compressed air, which is followed by the sound of metal rubbing against metal. The vision in front of him suddenly widened, and he couldn't react because of how sudden things were happening. The chest plate armour of the Silhouette Knights was connected by compressed air for ease of entry into the cockpit. But it was opened suddenly, although he didn't activate the control for the hatch, and has no reason to do so. To open the hatch from the outside, you had to manipulate a complicated set of levers and had to be careful not to dismantle the armour by accident. Based on this situation, someone is opening the hatch from the outside using the lever. A figure jumped up to the open hatch which confirmed his deduction. It was a petite body, with a head of silvery, purple hair. That figure is Ernesti, who smiles casually at Dietrich and says: "I finally caught up with you, Senpai." Eru said in a casual tone, as if he has simply forgotten to bring something. Eru tilts his head and continued: "I will go straight to the point Senpai, are you running away?" For Eru, this question was meant to be a confirmation, but Dietrich trembled when he heard Eru. The sudden appearance of his junior asking so bluntly made him hysterical. "...! Ah, d... damn... right! Running... What's wrong with that! Just missing one man won't change the tide of battle! Why do I have to die in vain? The chivalry code doesn't tell us to abandon our lives!" Dietrich repeats his thoughts, not caring how broken his reasoning was. He did not answer Eru, but was trying to convince himself. Eru nods with his usual peaceful smile and said to the agitated Dietrich: "That's great." "... What?" Dietrich didn't expect such a reaction and lifted his head up, tongue tied. Great? What did he say to make Eru so happy? "Because, that reason is sufficient for me to borrow Guyale from you." When Dietrich realised what he meant, Eru has drawn his Winchester. This is the last thing he remembered while he was still conscious. After knocking Dietrich out with a single air bullet, Eru made a pleased expression and nodded his head with satisfaction. Although he can sympathise with Dietrich's situation, Eru is still angry. Eru perked himself up and scanned the cockpit. Silhouette Knights are ten metre tall giants, but the cockpit was tight and messy with all sorts of gears. The most prominent feature is the seat in the centre, the control stick to the side and the pedals under the seat. The Knight runner controls the Silhouette Knight by holding the control sticks and stepping on the pedals. Eru recalls the functions of the pilot seat and the activation procedure. After Eru undid the harness and was preparing to drag the unconscious Dietrich out, he thought of something. "If I leave him here unconscious, won't he die if wild beasts attack him?" Although he was angry at Dietrich for running away by himself, Eru was not willing to kill him. After contemplating for a while, Eru saw some space behind the seat. The cockpit of Silhouette Knights will usually have blankets, food, and a first aid kit for emergency supplies, enough for a few days of solo travelling if they lost contact with their team. These items are stuffed behind their seat so they won't interfere when they are piloting. "Eh, it's a bit of a waste, but I can make space here." Eru randomly pulled out some of the items and threw them out. After confirming that there is enough space, he squeezed the unconscious Dietrich in there. Although this position was uncomfortable for humans, but Eru wasn't bothered. After 'settling' Dietrich, Eru turned towards the seat. Unfortunately, the size is designed for high schoolers. Eru won't be able to reach the control sticks and pedals with his stature. The seat does not have the convenient function of being adjustable like the cars back on Earth. Eru had already anticipated this, and he

came with a plan in his mind. He slashed at the consoles on either side of the seat calmly, destroying its casing. He was not doing this out of frustration. He pulled out silver wires from within the destroyed panels — Silver Nerves. Eru coiled the wires around Winchester, sat down and buckle himself in. Winchester is made from that white mist tree that is an excellent conductor of mana; it becomes a primitive control input device by entangling Silver Nerves around it. “... I will have to do this live with no backup plan, failure is not an option.” The Silver Nerves transmit mana and scripts through the control sticks and pedals to the magic engine, which in turn uses scripts to operate the Silhouette Knight. The commands of the pilots are interpreted by the magius engine, transforming them into scripts to move each part of the Silhouette Knight. Taking this concept to the extreme, if you have great control over the scripts, you can operate the Silhouette Knight without control sticks. But that is only in theory. It is difficult for pilots to conceptualise and control Silhouette Knights through scripts alone, so the control sticks and pedals are necessary to reduce the burden on the pilots and make control simpler. By having physical control sticks and pedals that matches the four limbs of the pilots, the movement of these controls can be used as input data for the movements of the robot, a semi automatic mode of control. The current way of riding a Silhouette Knights is a combination of physical control and script transmission, a balance between simplicity of control and complexity of actions that can be taken. The problem Eru has with the Silhouette Knight lies with the difficulty in using the physical controls. That’s why he planned to use total script control from the start, using his own magius circuit to handle the large stream of control scripts. This is an absurd idea, but Eru has the script processing speed beyond the realm of normal humans, so it was a worthwhile bet. Eru took a light breath, calmed down, closed his eyes and concentrated. The Winchester connects to the Magius engine through the Silver Nerves. Normally, it is the Knight runner who answers the magic input query, so there wasn’t any resistance with the pilot assuming direct control. It was surprisingly easy to establish a bypass route. Eru’s conscious became one with the Silhouette Knight, reading and processing the pre-programmed scripts in the magic engine. Eru analysed the script with his eyes closed. He construct a magic program from nothing, growing it outwards in all directions. Arms stretched out from Eru’s mind to draw the magic program — reading its contents. Even though the code and symbols were different, but being in the flow of data is nostalgic, and he smiled gently. “Alright, time to show you see the power of a professional programmer.” He began analysing the core of the magic scripts at a fast pace, starting with comparing what he had learned so far with the scripts within the magius engine. “Starting pattern analysis... Similar scripts detected, physical boost, Amplifier...” Most of the scripts in the magius engine were similar to the scripts he knew. Eru identified them one by one, using the script to understand its purpose. The more similarities there were, the faster he could grasp the internal workings. “The base is physical boost? Crystal tissue is the emulation of muscle tissues. To move them, the theory is the same...” Using Architect sigils, he dissected each script. Each part formed complicated patterns and are interconnected, the magic program is expanding to the limit of his conscious. “The control of the crystal tissue... placement, the connection between each of the modules, output control, this is the mana output of the ether reactor...” Guyale, which was kneeling on one knee in standby mode trembles slightly. Its fingers move, its eyes begins to focus and see its surroundings clearly. “To activate... I will need to connect my physical boost with the movement script of the Silhouette Knight.

It needs to be converted to accommodate the Silhouette Knight, using the default output control parameters to move..." The mana produced by the ether reactor executes the script issued by the pilot, broadcasted out to the entire Silhouette Knight through the Silver Nerves. The Silhouette Knight loyally obeys the command, using the mana stored in the crystal tissue to contract and expand. The machine vibrates, standing up slowly like a new-born deer. "Operation parametre conversion complete, activation starting... Adjusting output values, mana reserves adequate. Okay, take one step..." Guyale's gigantic body balanced itself awkwardly, taking one heavy step after another, taking large but unsteady strides. The movement is like a zombie, staggering and slow. "Feedback adjustment, optimising." Eru used the feedback details from practical movements to scan for excessive movement in the crystal tissue and debugs the script. These scripts still has traces of being a magic script, but errors were detected by synchronising the movement and user input, optimising it in a short time. Guyale's movement changed from unsightly shuffling to a graceful walk in the span of a few steps. It had been half an hour since Eru started accessing the magius engine. The Silhouette Knight, the weapon which is the crystallisation of humanity's wisdom was now completely under his control. Guyale moved as Eru wishes. There are no lags because of physical defects or inefficient scripting. It is one with the pilot, making total full control a reality. The situation is dire. The high school Knight runners are in a deadly battle all this while, so Eru issued Guyale a command. It accepts the command and starts sprinting as if to make up for all the time that was wasted. But— As he ran, Eru's expression shifted from a tension to a smile. He didn't feel anxious or pressured. The reason was simple; Eru was piloting a robot right now. The robot follows his wishes and was sprinting wildly. Eru didn't think too much when he chased after Guyale; he was too preoccupied when accessing the magius engine. He only had the leisure to think after he started moving, coming to terms with what he was doing. Eru thinks it is childish to react this way, but he couldn't contain his emotions. "Ah, Ahhh, Ahhhhhh! Robot, robot, I am piloting a running robot!" For him, be it the tremour of each step the machine took, the Holo Monitor showing the scenery that was disappearing at an horrifyingly, fast pace or the inertia Eru is feeling, all of it felt so blissful. Who can stop Eru's joyous laughter? Eru forgot about the powerful Demon beast that was waiting for him ahead, and immersed himself in the happiness of piloting a Silhouette Knight. Guyale ferries Eru, who forget his original objective as well as the foaming and unconscious Dietrich towards the battlefield at an amazing pace...

Knights & Magic - Volume 1 - Chapter 8

The trees in the plains increased in number gradually, until its density matched that of a forest. A road paved with stones extended to the east of this forest; it was the biggest road in the Fremmevira Kingdom that leads to the east — ‘East Fremmevira Highway’. From Känkänen to Jantunen was the ‘West Fremmevira Highway’ and from Jantunen to the Kingdom’s border was the ‘East Fremmevira Highway’. These two highways are built with cobble stones, a historical route that was paved for the ease of transport when constructing the fortress at the frontlines. It now shoulders the duty of intra-kingdom transport; its active use matched its reputation as the leading traffic junction. The road that is used frequently by caravans with Silhouette Knight escorts was desolated. It might be due to the Demon beasts stampede or the rumours spreading among merchants about the sightings of a gargantuan Demon beast. There is a tense silence on this road, which was broken suddenly. The sound of hooves from dozens of carriages reverberated in the air, as they ferried the Laihiala Pilot Academy students who are escaping. The high school Knight runners are risking their lives to cover the evacuation, so the carriages were running at full speed. But this was too taxing on the horses, so the pace was slower than normal. Even so, they were already halfway to Jantunen. The exhausted students sat in the carriages. They weren’t chased by any Demon beasts during this period. They had calmed down after some time, but the uneasiness in their chest lingers. “What happened to Eru—?” With this solemn atmosphere, Chid and Ady sat on the last carriage, looking behind them blankly. Eru jumped off the carriage and entered the forest when they were escaping from Cloquet’s Forest. It happened so suddenly, that they lost track of him before they could even try to stop Eru. “... Hey, could it be...” Chid mumbled, as if he thought of something. Ady tilted her head questioningly. “That guy, did he hijack a Silhouette Knight to join the fight?” Impossible— Ady wanted to dismiss it, but fell into deep thought. The probable deduction morphs into a clear image in her mind. Common sense tells her that Eru, who did not attend pilot school can’t control a Silhouette Knight. But he might make it work with what he learned through self study— She didn’t know that Eru has actually succeeded. Ady easily imagined the face of Eru challenging the Land Emperor head on, it seemed so natural. “Ah— Yeah, that makes sense. Eru will probably do that.” “No need to worry. He can run away with those legs of his if things goes awry.” The magic invented by Eru called ‘Aero Thrust’ is surprisingly fast. Who can catch up with Eru who was faster than wolves and rivals that of a bird? Even if the opponent was that mammoth Demon beast, Eru can run away if he puts his mind to it. The two of them imagined that scene and laughed. As they predicted, Eru had hijacked Guyale and was charging towards the Behemoth. It was hard to tell if it was a blessing or a misfortune that the twins, on the shaking carriage had no idea about this. The instructor on the carriage in front alerts the entire convoy. Clouds of dust can be seen in the direction they are heading, and they heard the sound of the horses’ hooves in the distance. Everyone understood what was causing all

that racket. A group of Silhouette Knights—the standard model ‘Karrdator’ was advancing in a column. All citizens of Fremmevira Kingdom were familiar with these figures and understood why they were here. “...The garrison Knights of Jantunen!” The voice of the instructor on the leading carriage reached the carriages at the back. The students poked their head out of the carriages one by one, their face bright with excitement. This group was a scale larger than two platoons, consisting of roughly ninety Silhouette Knights. They are followed by the maintenance and supplies corps. Most of Jantunen’s military forces are here, the most they can muster one day after receiving the envoy from Balguerie. Karrdators are the official mass produced standard model, with rugged exterior. After experiencing many battles, it has a unique charm to it. Their shoulder armour was decorated with the Fremmevira Kingdom flag and the Jantunen city crest, displaying the pride they had in protecting this land. The Laihiala students are not uneasy anymore. No matter how mighty the Demon beast was, the band of Knights will defeat it. They had faith in the power and credibility of the Knights. A sense of relief spreads among the Knights who had discovered the carriage at the same time. Although they had set off as soon as they could, they had already mentally prepared themselves for the possibility that the entire Laihiala student body being massacred. From the looks of things, most of them made it out safely, and had brought with them valuable information about the current location of the Behemoth. “I see... the high school Knight runners...” It included information on why the Laihiala students managed to evacuate safely. A lot of the Knights are graduates of Laihiala Pilot Academy, and are moved by the honorable actions of their juniors and steeled themselves. “Please rest assured. In order to protect our kingdom, and not let their sacrifices be in vain, we will crush the enemy.” The Jantunen Knights engrave this determination within their hearts; their morale grew stronger than before. The band of Knights learned that the Laihiala students met the Behemoth less than half a day ago, so their meeting with the Behemoth is at hand. The tension of the Knights grew sky high with each step they take. A red Silhouette Knight was sprinting wildly in the lush forest. Its speed was incredible; double that of a normal Silhouette Knight.



Because Eru is controlling it with magic scripts, he is now in sync with the magius engine. His thoughts are converted into scripts that are transmitted to the entire machine without any lags. The crystal tissue of the Silhouette Knight is being moved, its reaction speed is better than organic muscles, executing commands without delays. Guyale now has double the reaction and movement speed of a standard Silhouette Knight. Guyale maintains its peak performance as it runs, and heard the sound of howls in front. It was a mix of lightning explosion and raging winds. He will engage the Behemoth in a few minutes. Eru's expression twisted with joy, showing unrestrained happiness as he begins his first battle in a Silhouette Knight. With a dull thud of metal against metal, the steel giant was knocked into the sky. It flew under the tremendous force and hits the ground hard, tumbling a few times. No one could spare the effort to confirm the safety of the pilot, but from the way it lands, the caved in torso and the smashed arms, the pilot couldn't be unharmed. "Damn!" The high school Knight runners kept on fighting after the middle schoolers evacuated. It's not that they didn't want to run; they don't have the luxury of showing their back to the Behemoth. The battle has raged on for some time, compared to the fatigue showing on the pilot's faces, the Behemoth lived up to its name of being a fortress, showing no signs of slowing down. There was also an overwhelming difference in strength between them, the discrepancies in endurance was surfacing with each passing second. Facing pressure that the Knights at the borders failed to withstand, the high school pilot's machine fell one by one, there were only three left. The Behemoth's tail swung towards Earlecumber, whose pilot Edgar was distracted by his comrade's demise. Edgar instinctively felt that he couldn't dodge the tail bent like a whip, and pushed the stance of Earlecumber as low as possible while swinging the shield on his left arm, parrying the blow. An incredible technique only Edgar, who was the elite in high school, can pull it off with the help of Earlecumber's excellent performance. But the shield was knocked away from his hand with just the tail's glancing blow. Earlecumber cautiously steadied its stance and pull away from the Behemoth. I lost my shield! This is bad, the situation is desperate! Even so, Earlecumber's damage is slight, the other two machine's mana pool and damage was at their limit and might cease any second now. Edgar couldn't shake off the foreboding sense of doom that flashed across his mind. His team couldn't hold on much longer and might be wiped out in five minutes... The Behemoth didn't let up its attack, shooting out Tornado Breath again. The raging wind has a large area of effect; they could be pulled in if they didn't get further away. "Please... Trandorches, move!" Helvi realised that the Tornado Breath was aimed at her and scream like a banshee as she tried to get away. Trandorches squeezed out its last ounce of strength, despite the accumulated fatigue and damage, but lost its balance because of the fierce air current. "Helvi! — Damn it, make it in time!" Edgar roared, commanding Earlecumber to charge at the Behemoth, who was in turn closing in on Helvi in order to distract it. He hung on to a glimmer of hope and fires his Silhouette Arms, Arquebus. His full power attack bounced off harmlessly against the armoured shell, while the Behemoth was still locked onto the Silhouette Knight before it. The running Behemoth accelerates, closing in on Trandorches that was struggling to stand. Just as Helvi and even Edgar was prepared for the next victim to appear— "Ah hahahaha! Hue hahaha! Found it — I am here!" A red Silhouette Knight intrudes into the battle field with arrogant laughter. The first thing he saw in the forest was the Behemoth that was about to run over the robot lying on the ground. Guyale increased its speed

instantly, rushing to the Behemoth's left flank like a scarlet bullet. It draws its sword and lunges without thinking — concentrating his power at a single point, aiming at one of the few weak points of the Demon beast known as a fortress, which were its eyes. Guyale not only moved at a speed beyond normal machines, but it was accurate and precise. Before Guyale's blade reached the Behemoth, it noticed the red figure — because of that, it turned its head on reflex. The distance was too close to avoid, Guyale's sword accurately caught up with the eyeball on the Behemoth's head as it turned. The sword looks as if it was drawn in, stabbing at the eyeball and colliding with the shell. This was a pure coincidence. The shell that should be protecting the Behemoth's eyes had a slit. That was a crack a certain Knight inflicted at the cost of his life, half a month ago. If the Behemoth didn't move and took the hit, this blow would probably be deflected by the shell covering it. But because it turned its head, the sword coincidentally pierced it from the gap. Guyale used double the speed of a Silhouette Knight and attacked with a stab that focused its entire metallic body weight. The sword screeches and sparks flew because of the friction, as it penetrates the pupil of the giant beast. Eru thought his concentrated fatal attack will continue until it reached the hilt, but it snapped in two loudly and shattered. The surprise attack took out that eye, but it didn't reach the skull. The sword can't withstand the impact of their collision and fractures. Eru lets go of the sword when he realised that it broke, and leapt into the air to avoid hitting the Behemoth head on. Guyale slips pass the Behemoth's charge with its massive body, spinning in mid air, followed by two back somersaults as it lands, pulling away from the Behemoth before stopping. The Behemoth let out an angry howl that was never heard before. Blood sprays out profusely from its left eye socket, something it has never experienced permeate its body. The defense of the Behemoth is top class among Demon beast, and doesn't suffer injuries even when attacked. The pain of its eye being pierced and losing half its vision is a setback it has seldom experienced. The Behemoth's remaining right eye is bloodshot as it searches for the accursed enemy that took its left eye. It lost interest in everything else; the only thing that matters is the red figure he last saw with its left eye. The high school Knight runners forgot that they were still on a battlefield as they stared at the scene before them, dumbfounded. They couldn't keep up with the development. They thought Guyale abandoned them, but it was back with amazing speed, and broke through the invulnerable shell of the Behemoth and blinded it. The giant beast before them was howling furiously as it took aim at the red machine. It was only concerned about Guyale, ignoring Edgar and the others. "Right, Helvi!" Edgar rush to the downed robot while the Behemoth was distracted. The exhausted Trandorches was damaged and couldn't walk properly. But Edgar was relieved that Helvi was still alive. Edgar felt a tremour and took a stance with Earlecumber. He then realised that the Behemoth was charging at Guyale with an angry howl. The one eye Behemoth was even swifter than before, but Guyale was more agile. Edgar questioned what he saw, the Guyale he knew had never displayed such a performance before. He even doubts whether Dietrich was piloting it. But he didn't have the time to worry about that. If Guyale can dodge the Behemoth's fierce attacks, then that means Edgar has time to rescue his wounded comrades. Sorry Di, please hold him off for a while longer...! They turned their back to the scarlet robot dancing with the giant beast, leaning on each other as they escaped. Edgar didn't know that Ernesti was piloting Guyale or what his situation was like. Inside Guyale, Eru was gleefully staring at the holo monitor that was displaying the approaching colossal body. "So this is a Behemoth, a Demon beast and battle. This is...

using a Silhouette Knight! To battle!” A ferocious smile appeared on his face. His surprise attack yielded results beyond his expectations. But the wounded and bloodied giant beast harbors even stronger killing intent and charge at Eru. With majesty comparable to mountains, it closes in with murderous intent and power that twists the scenery. Even though the scene before him was enough to scare off veteran Knights, Eru only felt intense joy. “Come at me, come at me, come on, come on!” —Piloting robots and fighting massive enemies. It was the dream of every robot nerd. Was there anyone who didn’t wish for this? He had no intention of backing down, to move away from his happiness. Driven by the elation of his body, his chosen action was— “Come on, I’m going ahead!” Guyale bends slightly and ran at the Behemoth while kicking up earth with each step. To close the gap in an instant. The moment before impact, Guyale disappeared from the Behemoth’s vision. The Behemoth, who lost an eye didn’t notice, charging at Guyale’s previous position. Guyale jumped a second before they collided, kicked off the Behemoth’s uneven armoured shell and jumped over it. For the blinded Behemoth, with its limited field of vision, catching Guyale was mission impossible. Eru somersault in mid air deftly as he thinks. “Ah, ah, ah, amazing! A shell with no gaps or weak points, invincible armour! It is too tough, even slashing at it with a running start won’t help, magic attacks are useless, too. Alright, just use one of the cliché moves in destroying massive weapons!” Eru mumbles nonsensically with heightened emotions, bending his knees smoothly to lessen the impact upon landing and drew Guyale’s spare sword. “The weak point of massive guys is usually the legs and joints. Let’s start there!” Guyale uses his running momentum and stabs with terrifying accuracy at the back of the kneecaps, aiming for the gaps between the shells. This attack hit the muscles behind the shell, but it felt tougher than he imagined. Eru noticed it and pulled out the sword, retreating from the Behemoth. “Hmm — it didn’t go in! Other than the shell, is the rest of the body this tough too?” Eru didn’t expect the Behemoth’s physical boost to raise the endurance of its internal tissues. To support its massive weight, the Behemoth must focus on strengthening its four limbs, which was obvious and a nightmare for its foe. The Behemoth was agitated by the injury to its hind leg and turned around. Even a slight graze from the limbs of the turning Behemoth will be enough to destroy Guyale. Eru pulls further back and runs out of the Behemoth’s sight again as he reviews his previous attack. “I didn’t harm the joints just now, but it is more effective than hacking at the shell.” Hehe — Eru is wearing a happy, cute smile for some reason. He still stands a chance, but the execution is difficult, and needs tenacity and patience. “Seems like this will be a long fight... Eh, I’m fine with that, I don’t really hate that.” Eru is smiling casually in the face of the raging beast and advances with the red robot. The battle is just beginning. Ug... Hmmm...? ‘He’ finally wakes. He sees a dark space in front. As his dull conscious clears, he feels pain from his uncomfortable body posture. “Uguu... here... here is...” He tries to resume a normal position in the cramped space and groans, but a special pressure pins him to the wall in front. He let out a muffled scream, the pressure clears his mind. What he felt was inertia — A familiar sensation for all Knight runners. But the inertia he felt was stronger than he remembered. This must be the pilot seat of the Silhouette Knight. When he thought about this — Dietrich Cunitz recalls the last image from his memory. That’s right, a short junior appear before him, and— He hastily assumes a normal position and lifts his head from the back of the seat. The first thing he saw was the looming Behemoth that filled the entire holo monitor. “Gyaaaaahhhh!?” You can’t blame him for screaming like a headless chicken. He saw the

close up of the ferocious beast straight after waking up. The sudden scream surprised Ernesti and he almost lost control. “Oh no! Ha!” After he recovered from tripping, Guyale slides to the left of the charging Behemoth, evading it safely. Eru pulled away from the Behemoth and glanced behind him before the Behemoth gets ready to charge. “Eh — good morning senpai. We are in a life and death situation, so please keep quiet.” Dietrich’s jaws drop after listening to his calm tone that contradicts its contents. The words sound logical, but he couldn’t understand why he was back here when he should have ran far away, his head is full of questions. “You... you! Are... you insane!?! No, before that, why are you fighting!?” He had loads of questions to ask, but has to shut his mouth as Guyale starts to run. The Behemoth’s furious face fills the whole holo monitor. The giant beast is emitting a much more murderous air compared to his prior escape. This was beyond the extent of chasing obstacles away, but raging killing intent. Guyale is moving at a speed that was faster than anything the Knight runner Dietrich has experienced, dodging the massive beast’s attack by a hair’s breadth. After seeing several scenes of imminent death, Dietrich didn’t care about appearance and was on the verge of tears. He suppressed his voice and gritted his teeth, enduring it with a pitiful face. He knows if he said anything that distracts Eru, Guyale might really be done in. What... is this!? What’s happening!? Is this my punishment for running off alone?



Although he didn’t know, the other machines are either destroyed or had fallen back, there is only Guyale battling alone here. It is ironic that the situation is the opposite of what happened when he fled. If Eru, who is piloting the machine, fights on, Dietrich couldn’t escape again. Seems like I am fated to stay here... Why did he bring me along?

He wants me to see the fight until the very end? He wants the man... who abandoned his comrades to watch? Eru couldn't leave him behind even if he wanted to — Dietrich won't be able to guess the truth. The titanic beast didn't care about Dietrich's feeling and the battle between the two rages on. The Behemoth used its devastating strength to shatters the earth, its Tornado Breath uproots the trees. A glancing blow from these will be enough to kill, but Guyale that is piloted by the petite youth is evading them happily and is even counter attacking the limbs of the beast. Dietrich lost his cool when he woke up, but has gathered himself now and was perplexed by another issue. Unbelievably, the young pilot is a match for the giant beast, although he is on the defensive. Because Dietrich was the pilot of Guyale, he understands how amazing this is. The performance of this machine is average, the training robots at Laihiala Pilot Academy are second rate equipment anyway. This was clear since the other Silhouette Knights piloted by high schoolers can't match the beast. The problem lies with this pilot. Dietrich also knows this short first year that shows up at pilot school occasionally. He would never have believed this small youth had such outstanding piloting skills. But since he is taking the beast on right now, Dietrich have to give in. Too amazing, no, that is an inadequate description. This is 'strange'... But if I... If we want to survive, I have let him fight...! Dietrich fell into the chasm of despair once, but he saw hope in the scene before him. A sense of longing grows in the feeble youth who lost to himself. In Dietrich's eyes, Guyale and Eru are fighting a steady battle. But in reality, they are not doing that well. There are two big and pressing issues. First is the mana pool of Guyale. The maximum time a Silhouette Knight can fight at full strength is one hour under normal conditions. Anymore than that and the mana supply will not be able to keep up with the usage rate, leading to diminished performance. It has been two hours since Guyale started the battle... This means that it has kept up peak performance for double its time limit. This was thanks to Eru's delicate control and his grasp of the operating system. The optimisation of the script lowers the mana consumption rate, limiting the usage of mana in tissues not in operation to conserve energy. Also, he is not running Guyale at full power all the time, and this includes breaks for Guyale to 'breath' and restore mana. His actions looked intense at first sight, but he has been secretly minimising its consumption rate once he decided to fight a long battle. But that was still not enough; he has exhausted half his mana reserve. If this goes on, he can optimistically hang on for about two more hours. Next will be the weapon's wear and tear. After attacking the Behemoth repeatedly for two hours, Guyale's blade is twisted and is full of cracks, making the attacks that causes minimal damage even less effective. There is also the magic armament, but Guyale's 'Chasm' <kanji: wind blade> is not suitable for pin point attacks. Eru considered programming an overed spell, but doing that while controlling the Silhouette Knight is too great of a burden, especially if it is a tactical level magic. He gave up on that but his morale is still high, although lacking the means of attack made him feel helpless. If I knew this would happen, I would have armed myself with several swords like a porcupine. Even though he was upset, Eru persist with his battle tactics. Or rather, he couldn't change it. Guyale relies mainly on evasive manoeuvres while looking for a chance to win. As the battle continued, even Dietrich noticed the frequency of counters was dropping. If they just want to survive, dodging will be fine, but they will lose in terms of endurance. If they plan to escape, they had to use this chance to attack the giant beast's legs and lower its mobility. And attacking is a possibility with Eru's piloting skills. But Eru has let a number of opportunities go. Why are you not

countering...! If you keep running like this, our chances of escaping will fall! Dietrich anxiety rises as he can only watch. As a Knight runner, Dietrich knows Silhouette Knights can't fight for long. He chose a time when Eru has evaded an attack and asked: "Hey... Hey, Ernesti, you have not been countering for a while, what's wrong!?" Eru was slightly surprised when the Dietrich, who has been quiet, suddenly spoke. But Eru explained the situation. "The Behemoth is too hard, the sword is tattered. The attacks are not damaging it." Dietrich stole a glance at the sword through the holo monitor; the blade was twisted badly and was totally blunt. Dietrich moans. Need to think... find a weapon... we made it so far, we can't die now! He searched frantically from the scene displayed on the holo monitor for something that can be used as a weapon. Ernesti is piloting Guyale, but there are things Dietrich can do as well. Dietrich is finally back on the battlefield by his own will, his mentality has changed drastically without him noticing, and his participation yielded great results. Eru was also scanning the surroundings as he fights, but he has to dodge the Behemoth's charges, so he can't focus too much on their surroundings. That's why Dietrich was the one who noticed 'that'. He shouted loudly when he discovered it: "Beside the fallen Silhouette Knight! Take its weapon!" Eru took just a second to look at the spot Dietrich pointed at and saw a Silhouette Knight that had broken down. Eru comprehends Dietrich's intention, accelerating after evading the Behemoth with a low posture almost hugging the ground. Eru charged forward and picked up a sword from the fallen robot. Since the high school pilots mainly used Silhouette Arms to attack, there was almost no damage on the sword. An invincible smile returns to Eru's face. "Thank you, senpai. I have been troubled because of my weapons." "No... No need for thanks, just carry on fighting the Behemoth!" Eru faced the Behemoth immediately and reevaluate its status. Its legs are bleeding after numerous slashes, meaning the damage it took was not trivial. "Okay, mana pool is less than 50%. If I don't take down a leg, it will probably catch up if we escape." Guyale raise its new sword and began its counterattack. The Behemoth was massive, but it was bad with intrinsic movements, so its natural enemy is Guyale which uses speed and precision as its weapons. The Behemoth used its endless stamina to rampage. Although it has been attacking nonstop, it has yet to land a single hit. Guyale on the other hand is dealing damage consistently to the giant beast. The wounds on the Behemoth's leg is significant. Dripping water can hollow a stone. With its eyes and limbs bleeding, even the fortress Demon beast Behemoth was slowing down. Dietrich was the one to notice again. Eru heard a shout from behind and scanned their surroundings quickly, and saw many Silhouette Knights. He won't miss that even if it is just a glance. These are 'Karrdators' that are synonymous to Silhouette Knights in Fremmevira Kingdom. They are spread out, surrounding Guyale and the Behemoth in layers. After seeing their machine model and the flying flags, they understood their identity. "Karrdator!? Ah, ahhh... that flag... It's Jantunen garrison Knights! Reinforcements are here to rescue us!" They are here... sooner than I expected, I thought it will take a bit longer before I can escape and rendezvous with everyone. Eru quickly thought about his next course of action. Guyale can still fight, but the mana pool was below 30%, it is at a critical juncture. Since the Calvary is here, there was no point in buying time, and let the Knights take over and retreat. The firepower of Guyale alone is not enough, the forces here should do. He was just stalling for time when facing the giant beast just now, but the time to 'defeat' it has arrived. The gargantuan beast is not concerned with the situation around it, and continued to stubbornly chased Guyale. Eru dodges easily, luring the

Behemoth to turn its back to the Knights. He then slipped past the left side of the Behemoth where it is blinded and dashed towards the formation of the Knights. The band of Knights probably understood Guyale's intentions and aimed with their Silhouette Arms. The giant beast only had an eye for the detestable red figure, and was finally being led to the stage of the final battle. A short time before the Knights arrived at the battlefield. Several Silhouette Knights travelled deftly in the forest, instead of the stone pavement of Fremmevira's Highway. They are the scouts of the Jantunen garrison Knights, their mission is to reconnaissance the status of the Behemoth before the main party arrives. After bashing into the forest from the highway, they found the density of the forest to be very high. Compared to using carriages and traveling by the highway, the team travels much faster by cutting through the forest. The Behemoth is much closer to the highway than the position reported by the students, so the scouts completed their mission and reported back in no time. "Is that so? That is right ahead of us... the Behemoth not taking the highway is a silver lining." Philip Hallhagen comments, after listening to the scout's report. He was prepared to fight the Behemoth on the highway if the situation calls for it, but that wasn't necessary. But his face turns stiff as he listened to the next report. "We have linked up with three of the training robots, there is still one more engaged in battle..." The high schooler's Silhouette Knights retreated from battle because of Guyale's intrusion made it to the highway, and was being protected by the garrison Knights. Trandorches and another machine were critically damaged, and were sent to the maintenance crew at the back for major overhaul. The remaining Earlecumber suffers minor damage and joined the fighting ranks after receiving simple repairs. The robot still in battle was Guyale. When the scouts saw the scarlet Knight, it was attacking with a fearsome might. The scouts did not know how to report this, so they just gave the position of the beast and the fact that a machine was engaging it. Philip and Gottfried plans the operation based on the gathered intelligence and relays the orders to all units. Their plan was as follows: They will spread out by squad level (9 machines) around the target in a semicircle. From the intelligence of the students who fought it, it is judged that close quartre combat with the giant beast is very dangerous, so they will be using Silhouette Arms and attacking in waves from a distance to damage the Behemoth. They have also drawn up contingencies for the Behemoth's charging and Tornado Breaths. They are expecting casualties, so the worse scenario will be the targeted squad will act as bait and stop the Behemoth's movement, while the others move in for the kill. The Knights move into the forest with the resolve to risk death in battle. The howl of the mammoth beast makes the forest tremble. As the Knights move into position, the beast keeps turning in circles at the same spot, rampaging painfully. The Knights were confused by this and were dumbfounded when they saw the reason. They saw a red Silhouette Knight moving at incredible speeds as the giant beast chased it with blood gushing out of an eye and howls of rage. "What, what is that..." The beast can shatter the Silhouette Knight with one blow, but the scarlet machine was using its superior speed to toy with it. Even the commander with his elite skills doubted whether he can match that speed. Everyone was impressed and sighs at this display. They understand that the giant beast is staying in place because it is persistently chasing the scarlet machine. It was too focused on the enemy before it and lost track of its surroundings. This is a great chance for the Knights. Suddenly, the red robot notices the Knights and stops. In the next instance, it lures the Behemoth to turn its back to the Knights and slips past the flank of the beast towards the Knights. Philip

grasped its intention and commands his entire force: "Scarlet Knight... Thank you! Don't let this chance slip away! Everyone, ready your Culverin <TL: kanji is Spear of flame>!" Receiving the command from Philip who lifted his sword, the Karrdators readies its magic armament 'Culverin'. Their objective is to attack in unison with magic, using their numbers to overwhelm the enemy. The red machine did not slow down, slipping to the back of the formation. Philip swings his sword down as it pass through the last of their ranks. "All units, fire!" The Knights anticipated this signal and shot out flames on cue at the Behemoth with their culverins. The high pitched sound reverberated as fire trails flashed through the sky towards the centre of the semi-circle, raining down on the mountain sized monster. Countless Flaming Lance pierced the Behemoth, who was engrossed with the scarlet Knight. The overed spell Flaming Lance exploded in columns of flames like a lotus within the forest. The tongues of flame engulfed the entire beast; the fire was so big that they couldn't see what was happening. Even so, the Knights did not slow down their persistent attack. Guyale who made it past the Knights stopped at the rear of the formation to rest his machine and recover its mana pool. The machine appears to be fatigued after making through a fierce battle; the ether reactor churns noisily as it runs at full speed. "... That's great! Well done! How, how's that? Damn Demon beast, this is the power of the garrison Knights! Hahaha!" Eru frowns when he heard the maniacal laughter of Dietrich behind him. Eru didn't relax as he watched the hellish flame before him. The culverins kept up its attack and the scale of the fire was increasing gradually, determined to burn everything inside it. Even the Behemoth, who took pride in its defenses won't be able to escape unscathed from this attack. But it is not an opponent that can be dealt with so simply... It was impossible for the situation to go as Eru hoped and the space that is burning is changing. The fire that is burning fiercely is swirling in the form of a whirlpool. No, it was not just the flame that are swirling, but the air current around it was sucking the flames in, turning it into a tornado of fire. The Knights sensed that something was wrong and adopted a defensive stance, but kept up their attack. The tornado flame finally evolved. The next second, it turns into a slithering burning snake and whips at the Knights. "What, what is that!" The burning snake spits at the Knights as it struggles, the flame that was shot out by the Knights was dispersed into the surroundings. Fortunately, the Knights kept their distance when they attacked, so the Tornado Breath was not fatal. Although they knew about the existence of the Tornado Breath, they didn't expect the Behemoth to use it inside that fiery pit, stunning the Knight and disrupting their formation. With the formation falling apart, the attack from the culverins slowed down. The Behemoth realised this and kicked at the remaining fire and leap out of the fire pit. After its shell was baked in hellish flames that can melt steel, it is burning hot and several wounds can be seen on the giant beast. The injuries on its limb sustained from Guyale's slashes are burnt badly after the baptism by fire. On the whole, the colossal beast suffered serious damage. The movement of the Behemoth has also slowed significantly, but it is still known as an extraordinarily tough beast with absurd endurance. The charge of the beast was enough to make the Knights who are reforming scatter. The Behemoth's massive body is in the middle of the reforming group. The movement of the Knights are slow because they are in the midst of forming ranks, making things worse. A number of machines was knocked away during the giant beast's advance, the robots that fell down were mercilessly trampled into lumps of metal. Some of them tried to engage the Behemoth. The shell that was weakened by the heat can be sliced by the sword, but the

blade twist and shatters before it reaches the interior. Even wounded, the close quarters battle between the beast and the Silhouette Knights are hopelessly one sided, a squad of Knights are forced into a corner. Although the Knights are prepared to sacrifice their lives, they are unable to attack in a position that will hit their allies. The occasional magic attack stops and their 'ace' showed itself. "Squad two, four and eight, ready the 'hammer'!" Phillips in his command machine 'Swordwort' swings his sword; his instruction gives a sense of purpose to the battle. The Knights were prepared to die in this battle, and with the battle turning into a melee fight, they restrains the beast's movement and showed their ace in the hole. The Silhouette Knights carrying a massive weapon and starts running to either flanks of the Behemoth. They are moving the 'Hard Crust Bunker' that requires four Silhouette Knights to use — simply put, it is just a giant lump of steel in the shape of a stake. As shown from its name, the Battering Ram that requires four Silhouette Knights to move can easily destroy a siege wall, the ace they prepared for the Demon beast with the reputation of a fortress. The Battering Ram is a powerful weapon, but it has the weakness of being 'slow and heavy'. It is a type of weapon that changes mass into destructive force, so it requires four Silhouette Knights to wield. It is also big in size, so it is a hassle to deploy or withdraw with it. To hit the Demon beast, they need to seal its movement. That is why the Knights are deploying their ace when the giant beast stopped its advance. The problem with the Battering Ram has been briefed to all Knight units, including the squad that was engaging the Behemoth. They knew they couldn't last for long but they refused to back down, facing the Behemoth to stop its movements. The Karrdators that are charging with the Battering Ram can see this scene clearly. The Knight runners in their seats grip their control sticks so tightly that it creaks. They step on their pedals with all their might, wanting to crash into the Behemoth immediately. This is the battle where they are ready to sacrifice their lives. Even so, their wrath towards the enemy that massacred their allies burns on. The Battering Ram squad roars as they charge in respond to the sacrifices of their allies. The air intake valve plays a high pitch screech, the Karrdator charge at their maximum speed. As they close in towards the beast, they are covered in the shadow of the mountain liked beast. The first Battering Ram reached the Behemoth's side. This was not a precision weapon, so they used their momentum to aim at the biggest target which is the flank and rams it in. The weight that requires four Silhouette Knights to move has amazing destructive power. The shell being cooked in flames, causing it to soften might play a part. The Battering Ram pierced cleanly through the shell of the Behemoth into its stomach. The stake seems to shake in that moment, the Behemoth's colossal body starts to move and it howls painfully, louder than when it lost its eye. Its howl to the sky makes the ground tremble and a massive amount of blood gushes out from its stomach wound. "Great! The Hard Crust Bunker is effective! Use this chance to attack and kill it!" Cheers erupt among the Knights. They know the Battering Ram is difficult to use, but its power can hurt a battalion level Demon beast. There are two more teams with Battering Rams and they are closing in on the giant beast. The beast is still writhing in pain, not noticing their advance. The two teams are aiming for the head and the other flank respectively. If they hit these two places, it will be fatal even for a fortress Demon beast. Most of the Knights are convinced of their victory. The Battering Ram team that is shouldering the entire army's hope is right before its target. The moaning and dazed Behemoth suddenly looks downwards. All the Knights and Eru didn't know what this means and was perplexed. The team that is charging with the Battering Ram didn't notice— The

Behemoth shoots a Tornado Breath at the ground. The fierce wind this close to the ground digs up the earth and the flying debris in this confined space explodes. The Battering Ram team was unable to evade this; the team aiming for the head was hit by flying boulders and smashed into smithereens. Amazingly, the Behemoth uses its stomach to withstand the explosion and the impact of the tornado and 'stood up' with this momentum. All the Knights that were maintaining the encirclement of the Behemoth stared at the images on their holo monitor in awe. The eighty metre long Behemoth had incredible weight, and its foreleg is completely off the ground as it stands. This bizarre situation made everyone's reaction slower by a beat. "Oh no! Danger, get away!" The team aiming for the stomach knew something was awry before Philip shouted and attempts to dodge. But they are carrying the heavy Battering Ram with them and had been charging at full speed. Even if they wanted to retreat, they couldn't stop their accelerating machine in time. The Behemoth's massive body fell with the pull of gravity right on top of them. The destructive force of the gargantuan Demon beast's weight was beyond that of the Battering Ram. It caused a small earthquake when it landed, shattering the ground and shooting debris like a shotgun to the surroundings. The dust flew sky high, covering the beast's entire body. The Battering Ram team that didn't get away in time was decimated, the Ram was flattened and the Silhouette Knights were beyond recognition. This attack was too rash, and the Behemoth that used it was hurt too. More blood flows out from its gaping wounds, and several cracks appear on its shell. It was not obvious, but the attack that penetrates its physical boast injured some of its internal organs, the Behemoth was also desperate. But the Knight's casualties were more severe. Including the squad that was attacked in the beginning, they had lost 40% of their forces and the flying boulders caused medium damage of another 20%. And losing their ace seriously hurt the Knights' morale. The attack they placed their hopes on was negated, this impacted their psyche deeply. Anxiety higher than before seizes the Knights. The culverin held by the Karrdator are shaking, the movement of the Knight runners were unconsciously transmitted to the machine. Not only the giant beast's power, but even its existence brings pressure that corrodes their heart. "... Guyale watches the string of attacks from the rear of the Knights, Dietrich was trembling inside the machine. Even the special attack that sacrifices part of the Knights was negated in front of the beast's strength; can they really take it down? The generous amount of fighting spirit in his heart recedes instantly. The damage to the Behemoth is significant, but seeing the power he had absolute faith in failing, shook his heart. Dietrich couldn't make collected judgment. The thing that returns Dietrich back to normal is the angry growl from the seat in front of him. "... Unforgivable..." Dietrich could only see the silver hair of Ernesti sitting in the seat, but he can understand the abnormal atmosphere emitting from Eru's body. "You dare destroy robots before my eyes!" "Eh?" "The only thing that is permitted to destroy robots... is other robots..." "Eh, eh!?" Eru mumbles reasons unfathomable to Dietrich as he stands Guyale up. Although he has a faint smile, his blue eyes differed from its usual shine, burning like a devil. As if it is channeling Eru's wrath, Guyale's air intake valve screeches louder, the mana flows through all the crystal tissue in the body, the body encased in armor is full of power. Mana pool is over 50%, the sword in its hand is serviceable and the machine is undamaged. The scarlet Knight took a step forward, Eru who has become a vengeful spirit returns to battle. The red Silhouette Knight charges at the giant beast, the cry of despair from Eru's passenger can be heard along the way. The Land Emperor emerged slowly from the thick

dust. Despite its body being covered in wounds, it can still move, displaying its amazing endurance. Battalion level-Demon beasts are truly impressive. On close observation, it is on its last legs. But the Knights with their devastated morale lost their will to fight when they see the Behemoth is still moving. They shoot their culverin in response, but their scattered efforts are ineffective. It can't even break through the weakened shell. The encirclement of the Knights that was sealing the Behemoth's movement also fell apart. Commander Philip felt a strong sense of danger from the sight before him. He has issued numerous orders, but it is not easy to build up lost morale and he is growing anxious. Suddenly, a scarlet wind pierced through the loose encirclement. The red Silhouette Knight was prominent among the earth colored Karrdators. It made a beeline for the Behemoth before anyone could react. "This is impossible! We are doomed; it can't be done, the Knights are here, there is no escape, ahhhhh!?" Eru, who is piloting Guyale didn't even look at the Knights and Dietrich's nonsensical scream didn't reach their ears. Eru's deep blue eyes locked onto the Behemoth. Leaving the Knights out of his mind, Eru closes in on the Behemoth. Even though the Behemoth was heavily wounded, it howled when the red figure in its memory appeared. It ignores the gushing blood and tattered shell and moves its limbs. The gap between them disappears. The speedier Guyale has the advantage. With suffering many cracks and fractures from the previous fight, the Behemoth's defense is full of holes. The scarlet machine turns into a whirlwind, slashing repeatedly at the Behemoth with its speed. The sword cuts accurately through a fissure, causing sparks and screeching noise as the shell cracks and fell to the ground. "Sword attacks are effective! This mean the enemy is at its limit!" Guyale glides around and slashes, turns back and pounces at the Behemoth again, turning his evasive tactics to offense. These two have traded their position. The Knights were shocked by the scene before them. In their eyes, Guyale is a machine piloted by a Laihiala Pilot Academy student. A student younger than the Knights is standing up to the giant beast without fear and attacking it. At a glance, it seems like foolish bravery, but this is why it has a motivational effect that fires up the hearts of the Knights. "All units, assume encircle formation! Form new ranks! Renew the attack!" The Knights felt shamed from losing heart before the Demon beast's might and move with renewed conviction. The units with restored morale formed up quickly and encircled the Behemoth. Each squad took note of the scarlet machine's position and started magic attack support, restraining the Behemoth's movement and damaging it. The sword of the scarlet Knight peeled off the shell of the beast, the culverin pierced the Behemoth's legs. The attack of the giant beast is sealed and it becomes a static target board. The table has been turned and the Behemoth was on the verge of defeat. This bolsters the morale of the Knights and Guyale moves freely. The colossal beast finally reached its limit, its shell is dropping off from the damages and its blood turns the ground into marsh. Anyone can tell the beast has lost its ability to resist. But something unexpected happened. A sudden pressure assaults Eru and Dietrich out of nowhere. As Guyale was turning its body to evade, the strength in one leg disappears and it leans heavily to one side. A strong force pushes the scarlet Knight to the ground and Guyale's red armor was twisted and peels off, scattering in mid air. "What happened!?" Eru continued to control Guyale in a panic, rolling backwards and kicking off the ground with all its might. Guyale finally steadies its posture with one knee on the ground. "The Behemoth didn't hit us, so why are we hurt..." Eru shift the machine's head to scan the status of the legs, finding the joints stiff and sees shards of crystal tissue falling out from

the gaps in the armour. Eru finally understood the situation after seeing this, this was not caused by attacks. Eru made intrinsic control possible with his full control piloting. But his high output demands made Guyale break under the heavy burden. This long battle has also exceeded the operation time of a normal Silhouette Knight, which adds to the stress, damaging the legs which took the brunt of the burden. Living beings will be alerted through pain stimulus. But Silhouette Knights are robots without the function of reporting feedback of abnormalities. You will only know when it exceeds the limit and suffers damage. Eru frowns deeply. Guyale holds the advantage because of its excellent mobility. But it can't fight on with its legs busted. Eru can only abandon the machine and run for it. There is not much time left for him to worry about this. The Behemoth is rushing at the hated red machine as usual. The culverins fired by the Knights rain down on that Behemoth as they try to save the scarlet machine that suddenly kneeled down, but it didn't stop the giant beast. The Behemoth's remaining right eye is bloodshot and full of hatred, an angry howl came from its mouth. The shattered shell and flowing blood didn't even faze it, the Demon beast charged with the conviction to decimate everything. Its speed was much slower, but it is a death sentence for the immobile Guyale. To break down with this timing... It's a pity, but I have to escape. With his capabilities, Eru can get out of the giant beast's range once he abandons the machine. That's right, if... it is just me. Eru can do it, but Dietrich behind him can't. Eru releases the harness and stares at the Behemoth on the holo monitor. There is no time left, the charge will shatter Guyale. Eru's thinking speed reached its peak. It is not good for my conscience to leave senpai here... But it is not easy to survive this. He desperately went through all sorts of possibilities. What Ernesti can do, what Dietrich can do and what Guyale can do. ... There is a way, but it is a gamble. There is only one chance; the chips are our lives... But to die with a robot is an acceptable way to go out with a bang. That's the best a robot nerd can hope for. Eru has no hesitation in choosing this insane option. To risk his life and fight the giant beast. "Senpai, can you hear me?" Eru's calmness doesn't match the situation before them. Will Dietrich sitting at the back listen? He is already in despair over their fate, mumbling as he pants. He is not acting normal. "If you hear me, please switch with me and take over the controls." Eru's tone is the same, but the strange aura in his voice made Dietrich tremble in fear. Eru ignores him, pulling Winchester and the silver nerves to the front, almost hitting the holo monitor. Leaving the empty seat. "It's hopeless! What can I do by piloting..." "It doesn't matter. Sit on the chair now if you want to live." Dietrich reacts to the words 'if you want to live'. He is on the verge of breaking down, but he still slides into the seat. "Shit... Shit! What are we doing! What can we do!?" "I will only say this once, so listen carefully. First..." Part of the silver nerve was pulled along with the Winchester, but several of them are still connected to the control stick. It can still be operated normally. Once he confirms Dietrich is holding the control stick, Eru releases his control from the magius engine's domain. The Behemoth is right in front of them. It is critically wounded with nowhere to run, but its massive body is still imposing, filling their entire field of vision. Eru takes a deep breath and stares at the figure in the holo monitor and concentrates. He pushes his unique skill 'the processing speed that can fully control a Silhouette Knight' to the limit and programs a large scale script. It's an overused spell in scale, similar to those used by Silhouette Knights but larger. He has a bigger mana pool than others as he has trained nonstop since childhood. But that is the standard for humans, and not enough to execute tactical level spells. Even if he can process and construct the script, he can't use tactical level magic.

But he is sitting on a large supply of mana right now. That's right, the mana from Guyale. Silhouette Knights can't construct magic alone. Eru didn't have the mana for tactical level spells. But they can cover each other's weakness and Eru is executing this never seen before plan. "~~~...!~...!!!" Dietrich screams without realising. Fear made him stiff, but Dietrich believes the young boy before him and acts. Eru focuses on the processing, creating a large and powerful spell to his limit. The Behemoth's head is like a protruding boulder, closing in on Guyale to smash it. Their distance is close enough to make out the details on the Behemoth's skin. Everything that follows happens in an instant. Guyale extends its arms as if to hug Behemoth and creates an air bullet but did not fire it out, constructing an air bag. Eru uses the magic he conjured to decelerate when moving at high speed, 'air suspension' and enlarged it to the tactical level. The air cushion he made collides with the impact of the Demon beast's charge. The compressed air was squeezed even tighter from the collision. A force that is still tremendous after hitting the air bag pushes at Guyale. The pressure deforms the armour and blows away the crystal shards. "Now! Jump back—!" Eru opens his eyes and shouts. He heard a reaction from Dietrich. Dietrich didn't think about the content of the instructions and reacted on reflex — extending his legs and pushing down hard on the pedal. Guyale's leg is broken and can't walk, but the crystal tissues that are still working executes the command faithfully and expends all its energy. The Behemoth has broken through the air cushion and is about to pierce the scarlet Knight — Guyale leaps back recklessly at this moment. The crystal tissues in the legs snap completely, but it has completed its task. "It's not over! Hang on! Hard skin!" Eru's operation is not over, he casted an armour hardening spell on Guyale's front armour. At this moment, the Behemoth's head touches Guyale and the hit lands. Weakening the impact with air cushion, minimising the force by jumping back and defending with hardening magic. Even with this, it didn't negate the force of the blow as the armour dents and the pieces surrounding it breaks and flies off. The holo monitor in front of the pilot seat shatters, making Eru gasp. "It is not enough after doing all this...!" All his effort was negated, making him think about giving up. But a small blessing aided him — The training machine used by the Laihiala Pilot Academy places its priority on pilot safety, so the torso armor is made thicker. The front armor reinforced by Eru's magic stays true to this priority, denting heavily but still was able to withstand the Behemoth's strike, protecting its passengers completely. Anyone would think the red machine was lost, but Guyale looks like it is hugging the head of the Behemoth, still retaining its humanoid shape. The Behemoth was baffled by the Knight that didn't fall apart from its charge. The attack still carries on, the Behemoth advances and pushes Guyale along. "... If we make it through." The time to strike back is here. Eru grabs the control stick and move Guyale's body. He only moves the robot's right wrist and lifts it up and punches at the Behemoth's head. No matter how weak the shell is, the body of the giant beast will not be damaged by bare hands. But the arm is not aiming for the shell, but the left eye socket. The broken half of a sword is stuck in there. Eru grabs the broken sword and activated all the remaining mana in Guyale's crystal tissue. He overrides all safety limiters, emptying all mana reserves, using all his processing power to construct the largest spell. "Checkmate!" After uttering this phrase softly, the largest scale lightning the world has ever seen channels through Guyale's arm into the broken sword, striking the Behemoth's head directly. The Behemoth is a living being and has a brain in its head. The lightning through the eye socket is conducted through the optical nerves and the blood vessels, hitting the brain

directly. The large current ravaged the brain of the Behemoth, frying the interior components. Even the giant beast couldn't take it when its brain, which is the control hub of living things burn. The Land Emperor finally took its last breath. The electric current continues to burn the nerves, making the Behemoth spasm and jerk. That flings off Guyale that was hugging the head onto the ground. Guyale has exhausted its mana pool, so it can't even harden its structure, breaking into pieces upon impact with the ground. — The giant beast collapsed to the ground slowly. Death comes to the powerful beast that rampaged. The ending was brutal and sudden, everyone was silent. When they comprehended that the Demon beast will not move again, joy spreads among the Knights in waves. It didn't take long for them to cheer in victory. "... It was dangerous till the very end, any mistake and we would have turned into minced meat." The decimated Guyale was in a pitiful state. The limbs had fallen off; the inner skeleton was breaking apart with the connection magic gone. Every piece of the armour was battered and there were only bits of red paint left. The pilot seat was also shaken up, but Eru casted air suspension with his own mana to absorb the impact safely. Dietrich was almost crushed to death from the pilot seat's inertia, but that was better than becoming minced meat for real. Although this was a plan that might kill them along with the Behemoth, Eru was relieved to have survived. He let out a long sigh and showed a gloomy expression. "...Ahhh... in pieces... Guyale is in pieces..." Eru ignores the unconscious Dietrich whose pupil had turned up and shakes his head, worrying about the wrong priorities. "Ahh, I can't stay depressed. Guyale, I will fix you, please wait for me!" Eru made a strange resolution and left the half destroyed cockpit.

Knights & Magic - Volume 1 - Chapter 9

The sound of timbre cracking can be heard repeatedly. The source is the mountain of mass—the carcass of the Land Emperor. When the Behemoth died, the mana supply powering the physical boost magic stopped. The massive body over eighty metres in length couldn't withstand its own weight and collapsed on itself. The shell armour that suffered countless cracks during the course of battle crumbles, the struts holding the body up crumbles one by one, the height falls slowly. The lower half of its body that supports the heavier weight is in shambles. The Jantunen garrison Knights cheers as the giant beast crumbles further, shooting their Silhouette Arms into the air with pride. But the Knights suffered serious casualties. That's why the ones who survived have to sing their victory song loudly as a tribute to those who fell in battle. Some distance from the Knights, three Silhouette Knights are advancing. Among the band of Karrdator Knights, these three has a different appearance and stands out from the crowd. One is the command Silhouette Knight 'Sordwort' piloted by the commander Philip. Compared to the Karrdators that focus on practicality, it has a prominent regal appearance and is covered in plate armour. Besides him is the vice commander's 'Cardiaria', a Karrdator that has been reinforced. Behind them is the training machine from Laihiala Pilot Academy, 'Earlecumber'. Its appearance is crude, but it is covered in pure white armour, giving it a different aesthetic compared to Karrdator. They walked past the Behemoth that is still crumbling and approached their target. The closer they got, the clearer the pieces with red paint.

—Scattered around here were the remains of the Silhouette Knight Guyale. The first thing Philip, who was leading the way saw was Guyale's right arm. Its skeletal structure was broken and it was bent out of shape. The trio glanced at it and continued without a word, finally reaching their main objective. The torso without its head and limbs, the armour was in shambles, the crystal tissue has been utterly destroyed. The armour protecting the chest cavity has caved in, the whole torso is misshapen. The strong frontal armour was a twisted lump, showing how strong the impact was. I did think it will be like this... From the looks of things, the Knight runner inside... It's hopeless... No one made a sound, thinking about the same thing. They had some hope, but if the impact shatters the torso, it is impossible for the pilot to survive. Philip and Gottfried stares silently at the holo monitor. The scarlet Knight from Laihiala Pilot Academy fought the Behemoth to the last breath to protect its juniors. Compared to the Knights who were on the verge of collapse, it was on the very frontlines. It battled the giant beast like a burning torch of courage, taking down the Behemoth with its life. Philip wondered what the pilot was like. The pilot should be a student, but his future is immeasurable. He had the skills to take down a Behemoth, the virtuous attitudes to risk his life for others, and the indomitable spirit to overcome the odds. He possessed the three characteristics a Knight should have. Philip had not converse with him before, but Philip gives a silent prayer for the hero who sacrificed himself honourably. Earlecumber moved ahead and kneels beside Guyale. Earlecumber's front

armour opens with the sound of compressed air jetting out. Edgar stands on the armour, silently looking at the remains for a while before saying “Di... I am late, but I still want to apologise... back then, I thought you abandoned us and escaped.” Unlike his calm tone, Edgar’s expression was twisted with regret. “I lost all respect for you at that moment... But I empathise with you too. The scenario was too dire then, I told myself ‘Di won’t work with us in this situation’. But... You came back.” Edgar’s clenched fists are trembling. “And, so... Sorry Dietrich. I don’t know why you were hiding your real strength. Even so, you sacrificed yourself to save us...” Edgar’s monologue was interrupted by an explosion. Shortly after, Guyale’s chest armour flew into the sky before him. The chest armour flew and made an arc through the sky and rolls loudly when it lands. The three robots followed the movement of the chest armour that blasted off, and looked back at the remains by their feet. A short figure climbs out from the cockpit as they watched in awe. “The front armour couldn’t open because it was bent out of shape. That took some effort to get out... Eh? What’s wrong everyone?” “... Huh?” Jantunen was under high alert because the deployment of the entire garrison Knights, but the gates are fully open to welcome the return of the Knights. The victorious garrison Knights returns in an orderly fashion, advancing slowly on the main street. News of the Behemoth’s invasion has spread throughout the whole kingdom with the deployment of the Knights. The citizens who were trembling from fear cheered with reckless abandon for those who had returned safely. Their excitement matches that of winning a war, and in reality, defeating a Behemoth successfully has more value than winning a war. Something followed the advance of the parade and the crowd was silenced when it enters the gate. That was the head of the Demon beast which was much larger than a Silhouette Knight. A carriage ferries the intimidating head, even the citizens that didn’t see it move knows it’s a threat. The silence spreads, and suddenly explodes in cheers twice as loud. Everyone is singing the exploit of the Knights, deepening their respect for their guardian garrison Knights. Jantunen’s parade reached its climax at this point. Some distance away from the main street, a quiet cafe that is isolated from the bustle of the city. Most of the citizens were gathered around the main street, leaving the cafe empty. There are just a few youths patronising the shop, they are people related to this incident: Edgar, Stefania, Archid, Adeltrud and Ernesti. “Really! You are too reckless...” Edgar sighs and lowers the teacup in his hand. He is saying this on behalf of everyone present. He couldn’t help himself from commenting after hearing Eru casually describe his actions during the Land Emperor incident. “This makes me sympathised with the ‘victim’ who was dragged in, Di...” After hacking into the magius engine, Eru exerts full control over the machine and fought. Just listening to this is enough to make anyone with common sense faint after screaming. The more detailed Eru’s explanation, the more troubled Edgar becomes. Stefania eyes widen and her surprise is evident. Chid and Ady are stunned, but accepts it since it is Eru. The twins looked at each other and said: “See, he hijacked a Silhouette Knight as expected.” “You two, what do you mean by ‘expected’? Although you are right.” Eru looks unhappy, but averts his eyes guiltily when the twins glares back. Apart from Eru, Edgar is the only one with experience piloting Silhouette Knights. That’s why he was shocked after listening to Eru, but was convinced. From what he remembered, Guyale’s performance was not that outstanding. If Eru didn’t hack in, it wouldn’t have been that powerful. But even with the facts right before him, Edgar just shakes his head. He suddenly thought of something. “Ernesti, if Di didn’t run, what would you have planned to do?” “Nothing. I

just would have went with the flow back then, and would probably have boarded the carriage and escaped.” Edgar’s face sours. What would have happened if Guyale didn’t join the fray? Edgar won’t be sitting here in that case, and the Knight’s casualties would probably double. Not only that, the Behemoth might not be defeated. Without question, a medal of honour should be awarded to the petite youth in front of Edgar, but rewarding his outstanding performance was an issue because of Eru’s position. Edgar bit his lip and goes into the main topic. “We... the surviving high school pilots, will be going to Känkänen for an awards ceremony.” Edgar felt conflicted even though he was talking about such a glorious event. “The Jantunen garrison Knights will send representatives as well, probably Sir Hallhagen and a few others. This involves a battalion-level Demon beast invasion, a story that is worthy to be spread within the nation, no, to all nations. They say there will be a grand ceremony.” “You are right, congratulations... but you seem unhappy about it.” “The existence of the scarlet Knight will be covered up for this incident... This means Ernesti’s achievements will not be stated.” Stefania wears an apologetic expression and looks at the tea beside her hand. Chid and Ady understands the meaning of these words after a while and glares at Edgar. Only Eru seems unaffected and nods. “I see. If I was a member of the Knights or an official high schooler, there wouldn’t be any problems.” “Hey, things would have been serious if Eru wasn’t there! Why can’t he receive commendations?” Chid stands up in protest. Stefania stops him with a look, sighs and explains: “Calm down. If a normal Knight performs so outstandingly, they will be promoted or commended. For high schoolers, they will be enlisted as an official Knight... But we can’t promote Eru that way.” “Why? Eru is obviously stronger than those run of the mill Knights!?” “Being a Knight means he has to join a band of Knights. He can be a member with his exceptional power, but there are some who will be willing to work with a twelve year old. Working under an organisation means Eru can’t be willful in his actions.” “We can work something out if he is an adult... If they pass over the Knights and grant honours to a twelve year old, the Knights will look bad. The honour of the Knights is the honor of the Kingdom, no one wants that to happen.” Eru tilts his head and ask with a smile: “I understand. Senpai are here to convince me?” The expression of Edgar and Stefania stiffens. Eru didn’t say much about their expression and continues: “Let’s forget about this incident. I am satisfied with piloting an actual Silhouette Knight. Instead of asking shamelessly for rewards, doing nothing is much more relaxing. Besides, I was the one who butted in without permission. I don’t want to be manipulated by others because of this incident.” Stefania nods her head in agreement. “That won’t happen, I guarantee in the name of the Serrati family.” “That’s right, I will remind Sir Hallhagen.” Eru nods after receiving their promises. Unlike Eru, Chid and Ady are unable to accept this, asking with a moan: “Eru, is this really okay?” “Yah, Eru’s dream is to be a Knight and pilot Silhouette Knights correct? Are you giving in now?” “This is an exceptional case. I don’t plan to demand for any rewards.” Seeing Eru consoling the unhappy twins, Edgar and Stefania breathe a sigh of relief. Guyale and ther Behemoth were both destroyed in the battle, a testament to the desperate situation Eru was in. Not giving any reward to Eru doesn’t sit well with them either. On the other hand, they understand the order of Knights won’t be able to handle Eru’s exceptional case well. They volunteered to convince Eru of the Knights’ dilemma in order to avoid using official orders to pressure Eru. They need not worry about Eru protesting violently, but the contents of their speech were filled with illogical reasonings, so they were prepared for the talks to be stall. They felt grateful for

Eru's generous disposition. Phew, that was close. I barged ahead without thinking too much; there will be tons of trouble if I make the Knights lose face. Giving me a way to reject the commendation cordially was a big help... Eru who appears to be drinking tea calmly was breaking out in cold sweat. To be honest, he was troubled over how to settle things on his end. It was hard for Eru to do anything in his position. The other party proposing a peaceful resolution made Eru relieved. I did have a great time piloting. I even got to see the magius engine's script, that is enough for a reward. And the Knights owe me a favour too. Being too forceful will blow matters up, just let them bask in the glory. Also... it will be good if I can build a close relationship with the Knights and the people present. Eru finish his tea happily as he thought about how to resolve the matter. The atmosphere was peaceful after ending the tense topic. The sound of cheers was continuing all this while. They chatted casually in the mean time. —His consciousness recovers slowly. His first thing he feels is a question. What... What happened? That time... the Demon beast... He felt a sharp pain next from all over his body, stimulating his mind and waking him up. "Eh... Uguu..." Dietrich groans from the pain of his protesting body and opens his eyes. The first thing he sees is a wooden ceiling. He turns his head and observes a white drape. He was still confused, but he understands the situation before him. He was warded in a hospital like facility— which means he is safe. ... This means, the battle was won...? He shivered when he remembered the giant beast. From the situation at that time, it was impossible to save him without getting rid of the beast. Dietrich deduced from this that the battle ended somehow, and was a success since he is alive. "Ara, you're awake?" Dietrich relaxed after deducting the crisis has ended, and more importantly, he is safe. As he lies down groggily, a voice came from his side. "This is Jantunen pilot's infirmary. You have lost consciousness for over a day after the battle." Dietrich turns his head with his eyes wide open. It's not because of the content of the speech, but the person who is saying it— "Don't worry, you have many bruises, but no serious injuries. You are young and will heal up in no time!" His white clothes almost bursting from his muscular body, and his hair was crew cut. His feet were a shoulder width apart but his knees were clamped together. He is speaking in a feminine way despite having a deep voice— This was a man. A scream erupts suddenly and fills the entire infirmary. A convoy comprising of carriages and Silhouette Knights are travelling along the gravel road leading from Jantunen to the capital — Fremmevira Highway. Inside the carriage are students from Laihiala Pilot Academy's Knighthood faculty. The Silhouette Knights are escorts from Jantunen garrison Knights. The Knights were headed towards the capital for the award ceremony and were acting as escorts since they are heading in the same direction. There is a person sitting on the top of a carriage. That person is basking in the sun, watching the long convoy line under the warm sun. At the end of the line was a wagon filled with recovered Silhouette parts. The machine that was wrecked by the Behemoth was turned into junk, but the most valuable torso was retrieved. The damage was assessed, if the magius engine and ether reactor known as the heart was fine, it will be easier to repair. And in the worst case scenario, they can place the heart into a new body. Jantunen garrison Knight's wreckage has been sent to Jantunen, the ones here are the Laihiala Pilot Academy's robots. The boy on top of the carriage, Ernesti looks towards the back with a blank expression. There must be parts from the scarlet Silhouette Knight on the wagon too, but it is covered by the canvas so Eru can't tell where it is. The last scene of the fight with the Behemoth while piloting Guyale flashed across his mind. He feels the bump of the carriage as he

reminisces. The action I took was a gamble largely dependent on luck. In order to avoid this, I need a machine that won't fall apart even when operating at full power... and this problem should not be entrusted to others lightly. Right now, Eru is the only one who can make a robot break down in such a short period of time, so he is the only one who wants to resolve it. He will create his personal machine one day. He needs to plan for that day.

"Eru, are you brooding over here?" As he was feeling troubled over many things, someone approached him from behind and hugs him. There is only one person who will do that in Eru's mind. He turns to look at Ady behind him. "Yeah, I am thinking about how to resolve the weakness in the previous battle." "Why— are you thinking about that again!" Ady looks displeased as she leans forward. Ady is taller than Eru, so Eru is squashed when Ady leans in with her body weight. Eru protest as his body bends forward uncomfortably. "I know, but I have to think it over when I have time, or it will be a problem in the future." The pressure behind him relaxes slightly, allowing Eru to breath. Ady stops moving and her displeasure fades, replaced by a troubled expression. "... Eru, you really... I hope you can promise me one thing." "What promise?" "Don't go by yourself, take us with you!" "That's a bit..." Eru couldn't see Ady's face, but he can feel the sincerity from her voice. Eru didn't turn back and looked ahead, thinking about Ady's request. He has been setting Silhouette Knights as his goals, and working towards that means... "We might not be able to help, but..." "Don't say that... it depends on the situation." "Really? I can't pilot a Silhouette Knight. How about telling us what you plan to do!" At this point, Eru couldn't reject her. "I understand... I will do my best. But it is an emergency, it will have to wait." "Hmmp! That's a cunning way to put it! Even though we can't do much, but three heads are better than one!" "Haha, that's right, three of us is... three?" Ady's casual words made Eru think. In his heart is a famous story, and inspiration strikes. "Three are better than one... three arrows compared to one arrow. One arrow is easy to break, but it is hard to break if there are three. Right, it is fragile and easy to break because it is separated. That hurts... Wut arf yu dooin?" Ady pulls both of Eru's cheek as he was spacing out. "Pay attention when talking to others, that was rude. Hmpf!" "That hurts... You are absolutely right, that was ill mannered of me." Ady looks are Eru nursing his cheeks painfully and thought of a good idea. She approached Eru from the side with a smile. Eru has a foreboding feeling looking at Ady's smile. "Right, I know a way! Teach me how to pilot Silhouette Knights!" "Wah— to use this method!" Eru groans and smiles awkwardly at Ady, and wonders how things had come to this. The roasted beef in the centre of the table gives off a delicious aroma. The cramped place around it are full of dishes. Eru's mother— Celestina Echevarria is pouring soup into a large bowl. Beside her is the mother of the twins, Ilmatar Olter (Ilma) who arranges the freshly baked pie. The extravagant dishes made the two happy as they laid out the plates. "Is it time for your Ady to learn to cook?" "Hoho, it's about time. That child is always messing around with Chid." They finished the preparation nimbly as they chatted and called their families to have dinner. The two families gathered shortly after and ate happily. This is the Echevarria residence. The Echevarrias and the Olters are together for a party to celebrate the safe return of their children. The parents planned to welcome them back after the field trip all along. But the children were involved in an unprecedented Demon beast invasion instead. The faces of every parent turned green when they received the news, including these two families. Ilma's only family are the twins, her anxiety is indescribable. She couldn't stay alone in that state, so the Echevarrias took her in for the time being. Now, both the

children and their parents had deepened their friendship. Fortunately, the crisis was over and the children had returned safely, all the families were busy and relieved. “To be frank, it’s great that everyone is safe.” Ilma watched the kids finish off the dishes and sigh. Tears well up in her eyes and fell as she relaxed. Ilma quickly covers her face. “We made you worry. As you can see, we are not hurt... This is a miracle.” “That’s great; the most important thing is that you are safe. Your appetite is good, as if nothing had ever happened.” “Nomnomnom!” “NornNornNorn!” “Swallow your food before talking...” Chid and Ady continues to stuff their face despite their mother’s instruction. They were eating tasteless preserved food while traveling, so they are focusing on the delicacy before them. “We heard that it was really dangerous, but you all seem fine. What did Eru do?” “Yes. Behemoth and I beat each other up.” “Cough! Cough, cough.” Mathias chokes on his food when he hears the conversation between the mother and child. “Ara, wasn’t the Demon beast really big? Are you okay? Did you give it a good beating?” “I borrowed a Silhouette Knight from a senpai, so I’m okay. It was rather dangerous, but I beat it up really well and won.” “Ara, ara, you can borrow Silhouette Knights? That’s wonderful, Eru. But don’t be too reckless. It’s not something you can borrow anytime you want, right?” “That’s right. Luckily we had that ‘good senpai’ who aided me.” Mathias forced himself to look away from the two of them; the others casually ignored their conversation. In some way, this family was really disciplined. Only Eru’s grandfather refrained from speaking during dinner, watching everything. After finishing, he called out to Eru. “Eru, I want you to accompany me to someplace, alright?” “Okay grandpa. Where are we going?” “Erm, we are going to...”

Fremmevira Kingdom Capital, Känkänen. Located at the foot of mount Aubigne, it served as a front line fortress in the past. The highway on either side was made with robust stones, a legacy from its days as a fortress. Several layers of walls are erected with the capital at its heart. Only the outer most siege wall has defensive functions, the rest are used for zonal segregation. Its existence is a testament of the history of this city and nation. In the centre of the capital lies ‘Castle Shreiber’. The castle has traces of its days as a fortress, ancient and majestic. Even now, the tough appearance of the fortress commands respect. Its reputation as the ‘Kingdom of Knights’ is presented harmoniously, allowing all visitors to feel the pride of the city. In the heart of Castle Shreiber is an audience hall for the King to receive his guest. It is a vast space with a high ceiling, enough for Silhouette Knights to enter comfortably. Elegant drapes are hung on all the walls in fixed intervals on the pillars. A red carpet is rolled out in the centre, and at its end is the throne for the King. An amazingly big seat is situated behind the throne, with a Silhouette Knight sitting on it. That was the personal Silhouette Knight of the King — known as the king’s Knight ‘Raids of Valor’. Its appearance was more elegant than any machine within Fremmevira. A cape with the same pattern as the national flag covers its shoulders, displaying the majesty of a Knight standing at the very peak. Cardiarias piloted by the royal guards are positioned to the side of the hall with Raids of Valor right at the centre, a powerful and intimidating scene. Sometimes, the hall will be cramped with soldiers and Silhouette Knights, but there are only a few people here today. A middle aged man was sitting on the throne before Raids of Valor, the tenth King of the Fremmevira Kingdom, Ambrosius Tahvo Fremmevira. In front of him are Marquis Joachim Serrati and Jantunen garrison Knight’s commander Philip Hallhagen. According to customs, they have to address the King while kneeling on one knee with their heads down. After the King grants him permission, Philips raised his head to report. “That concludes the report

for the battle with the Behemoth.” King Ambrosius acknowledged with a grunt and a nod after listening to the detailed report from Philip. He was holding a concise report in his hand and was browsing it as he listened. “And the carcass of the Behemoth?” “Your Majesty, it’s impossible for the garbage collectors to harvest a colossal beast like the Behemoth, I have dispatched the Silhouette Knights to assist them. It should be completed in the next few days.” “I want to use its carcass to offset our losses. But our casualties are light, considering the opponent was a battalion-level Demon beast.” “Your Majesty, Jantunen’s forces are depleted, please allow me to send some reinforcement to support them.” Ambrosius focused on one point of the report as he listens to Joachim, it is the logs of the scarlet Knight and its pilot Ernesti. A baffled expression appears on the King’s face. “Echevarria... Lauri’s grandson? What an exceptional performance. Isn’t that right, Philip? It is unbelievable; did this child really topple the Demon beast before everyone?” “Yes, Your Majesty, I saw it with my own eyes. I understand the content seems dubious to Your Majesty...” Philip couldn’t give a precise answer to the King in regards to this and his voice grows gradually softer. In fact, Joachim was doubtful as he listens to the conversation between them. “I don’t think you will spin such a ridiculous tale, but this makes me worried... Especially this part, rewriting the script in the magius engine. If that’s true, that is really marvelous.” “Half of it are rumours, but I saw it myself... and I’m convinced that it really happened.” “I heard the same report... Only Sir Hallhagen and the Knights know the truth.” Ambrosius closed his eyes. The ability to fight a Behemoth is amazing, but that is only a might of one man. But it is different if he can reprogram the magic engine, which is a skill that has no precedent. After thinking it over, he mumbles: “... This child is too dangerous.” Philip panicked when he heard this; Eru literally saved the lives of dozens of pilots with his participation. They couldn’t commend Eru because of the state of things, but Eru accepted it unconditionally, so Philip owes him a favour. He might be a youth that is much younger than him, but having fought as comrades, Philip won’t forget how Eru saved his Knights. “You Majesty, allow me to report. This boy might be just twelve, but he is knowledgeable and courageous. His etiquette is fine and his peers like him. More importantly, he was always on the frontlines during the battle with the Behemoth...” Ambrosius stopped Philip’s words with a wave of his hand. “Don’t worry; I am not planning to do anything to him. It might be fine now, but you say he is just twelve years of age. Having amazing power at such a tender age... Since he is just a twelve years old boy, he might grow wild with his exceptional strength. That’s my worry.” Ambrosius was right to be worried. No matter how talented or pure in character, people can change with the passage of time. Especially a twelve year old who is moving into a rebellious and emotional age. If he grows arrogant because of his talent, it will harm him in the end. But inside Ernesti was a soul with forty years of experience, so normal conventions don’t apply to him. But that is beyond their imaginations, so they are worried that Eru will stray from the right path in the future. “If that’s the case, what should we do?” “Since he doesn’t chase mindlessly after glory, he might become a great Knight... We need to guide him. It might be unnecessary since Lauri is there. Hmm, alright... Arrange for Ernesti to meet me.”

After Ambrosius issues his orders, Joachim and Philip bows and acknowledged.

Knights & Magic - Volume 2 - Chapter

Prologue

To the east of Zetterlund continent lies a nation situated at the perilous foot of mount Aubigne, the Kingdom of Fremmevira. This world had a unique form of natural power—‘magic’. And there were beasts who uses ‘magic’— ‘Demon beasts’. The nation acts as a barrier against the Bocuse Sea of Trees, where many Demon beasts lurked. The people called it the ‘Nation of Knights’. The year is 1277, winter was over and it was the time for the bountiful spring that brings life. It was during this time when that incident happened. Battalion level Demon beast ‘Behemoth’ attacked. The Demon beast crossing the defense line in the eastern borders of the Fremmevira Kingdom was known as the ‘Behemoth Incident’. That Demon beast was en route to disrupting the major transport artery of the nation, pushing the Kingdom of Fremmevira to the edge of downfall. During this crisis, the ones rised to the occasion were the ‘Jantunen Garrison Knights’ and the trainees from ‘Laihiala Pilot Academy’. Without regarding their own safety, they fought the Behemoth courageously. At the expense of many sacrifices, they defeated their adversary and brought peace to the nation— The majestic Aubigne Mountain Range was right behind the Capital of the Fremmevira Kingdom, Känkänen. At the centre of the Capital was the castle Shreiber, which was surrounded by a lively atmosphere. Bards singing about legendary tales were everywhere, entertaining the people in the taverns who were drinking wine in broad daylight. The merchants used this opportunity to set up shops, advertising their wares loudly. Everyone were enjoying themselves and laughing cheerfully. This chaotic scene was because of the award ceremony held in the castle for the Jantunen Knights and the high school student pilots of Laihiala Pilot Academy. Those who heard the events of the battle trembled in fear and vigourously praised the Knights who fended off the Demon beast. They also took the opportunity to enjoy this grand event. An elderly man and a young child walked on the crowded streets of the Capital. They were the dean of Laihiala Pilot Academy ‘Lauri Echevarria’ and his grandson ‘Ernesti Echevarria’. The streets were overflowing with pedestrians. The petite Eru grabbed onto Lauri’s clothes so they won’t be separated. In his other hand was a thin slice of baked fruit pie. “Grandpa, do you want some?” “Hmm. I’m fine; eat all of it, Eru.” Eru nodded and he took large bites as he moved nimbly among the crowd. This was brought from a stall that could be found anywhere along the road. There are so many people... Grandpa is taking me out for a trip, and it turned out like this. The young and old pair was in the bustling Capital because of the King’s invitation. After Eru asked, he found out that Lauri and the King were classmates. Because of their relationship, Lauri held the post of a Royal Consultant in the past. Lauri eventually became a dean, and their friendship continued till this day. The King knew Lauri was related to ‘Ernesti Echevarria’, the person who piloted the red Silhouette Knight skillfully during the ‘Behemoth Incident’, so he invited both of them for an

audience. Eru who heard about this couldn't shake off the ominous feeling he had during the journey here. The King had asked specifically for him, he wouldn't let him off easily with just a few questions. With his sigh smelling like sweet fruits, the two of them moved towards the Royal Castle against the flow of the crowd. The main gate of the Shreiber Castle was bustling with people while the back gate was relatively quiet. Making their way through the crowd, the duo finally reached their destination and was received by the guards. They were led to a conference room-like place in the Castle and were left alone after being asked to wait momentarily. The grandfather and grandson were alone in the vast room. The cheers of the crowd at the award ceremony could be heard from the distance. "Eru, are you nervous?" "Of course. I never thought I would have the chance to meet His Majesty." "I thought Eru won't be bothered by such small matters." "The way you put it sounds mean, grandpa." Chatting idly when they were about to meet the King, the two of them were rather audacious. Shortly after, the guards appeared again and announced the arrival of the person they were waiting for. They turned and stood. The door opened and several people walked in. Leading the way was the King everyone in Fremmevira knew, 'Ambrosius Tahvo Fremmevira'. He was past his prime, but his ageless majesty could be felt clearly. Two men with the air of nobility followed behind him. When Ambrosius entered the room and met Lauri's eyes, his mouth turned into a smile in an instant. "Thank you for coming, I have kept you waiting. It's been ages, Lauri." "Long time no see, Your Majesty. I should be the one thanking you for meeting us despite your busy schedule." "Don't mention it, this meeting was arranged out of my curiosity after all. Well, he is the pilot of that crimson Silhouette Knight... right?" Ambrose and the nobles behind him shifted their gaze to Lauri's side. The report stated a child twelve years of age piloted a Silhouette Knight and fought the Behemoth, so they thought it would be a youth that looked older than he actually was. But in actual fact—before them was a child that was smaller than a normal twelve year old, a boy that could be mistaken for a girl. He had a gentle appearance, a round face with determined bright eyes blinking. His silvery purple hair reached his jaws, covering the side of his face. This made the bunch, who had experienced great political trials stiffened. But the King was no ordinary man. After raising an eyebrow in surprise, he changed his expression to one of curiosity in no time. "Oh, I thought it was a boy from the reports, I didn't realise the pilot was a girl." "No, Your Majesty. I might look like this, but I am a boy. Pardon my late introduction. Nice to meet you, I am the grandson of Lauri Echevarria, Ernesti. I am very pleased to meet with Your Majesty today." "Oh, I heard you were a twelve year old child, but aren't you outspoken? It's hard to converse if you are too formal, please relax." "Alright, as you command." Seeing Eru accepting so readily, the two men behind Ambrosius changed their expression from shock to dumbfound. They were unable to judge if Eru was a great person or just someone who didn't know manners. "I will get to the point. I invited you here to conclude the aftermath of the 'Behemoth Incident.' I heard that your performance was excellent, but could not be commended publicly." Ambrosius said as he looked at Eru. "I heard you are agreeable with that. But I felt that it isn't right to simply dismiss a capable Knight who could fight the Behemoth on equal grounds, so I want to give you a fair reward in private. That might be so, but it is hard to give an appropriate reward for an underaged child." Ambrosius explained with a warm smile— but no matter how you looked at it, it was a smile with 'malicious intentions'. To bring up this issue that had already been rejected, is he testing me? Eru behaved as usual, but the wariness in his heart

increased slowly. “Be it promoting you to a full fledge Knight or granting you nobility titles, your age is a limiting factor. Do you understand?” “Yes, I understand that it is too much for an underaged child of twelve years of age.” “Hmm, how perceptive of you. Eh, and so... what do you want? I think it would be easier to ask the person in question directly. If it is something that matches your accomplishment, I will grant it to you as a reward.” Ambrosius’ direct explanation surprised Eru. Accepting this proposal, Eru’s brain started churning at a high speed. It’s hard to imagine... but is this out of his good will. Or, does he want to see if I am easily baited by rewards? Wanting to give me a reward now is suspicious. A pie that fell out of the sky into his hands. But there were no free lunches in this world. This was common knowledge, be it in this world or the previous one. That might be so, but I can’t turn down the offer from the King... I have to say something. But, finding a reward that befits the ‘contribution of defeating the Behemoth’. How much is this worth in terms of money? How much is it in terms of material? Is there anything he wants aside from titles? Eru simply didn’t know how much this is worth. Should he use his age as an excuse and make an unreasonable request— when he pondered about that, he dismiss the thought. Wrong, I don’t think that is an expression he would show a child. In Eru’s memory, he found Ambrosius’ expression familiar. Browsing through the fading memories of his previous life, the warm expression was looking for the smallest loophole in the conversation— ‘the expression of a salesman’. Something must be up. How about asking for a Silhouette Knight? It would be great to have a reference model. It might work from the contributions I made. Fukeke. As Eru was about to give in to his desires and give his reply, a strong thought flashed through his mind. ...No, no, this is a great chance. There is no way to tell if I will ever have a chance to ask the King for something. Then I should ask for something only the King could give?... Right, that should be the thing that is the hardest to obtain!! It was just a short moment, before Eru finished his thoughts. It’s fine if it doesn’t work, he could think of something else then— He thought optimistically as he casually said: “Well, Your Majesty, the thing I crave for the most right now is knowledge... knowledge on ‘how to make an ether reactor’.” The air froze in silence. Hearing this whimsical wish made Ambrosius surprised. That was expected, this was too weird as a wish for a twelve year old child. Not just him, even the usually calm Lauri was tensing up, the other two were stunned and seemed baffled. They were treating Eru like a child, if the request was ‘unexpected’, they won’t lose their composure. But what Eru wanted was ‘impossible’ for a person. This answer was too unexpected, even the wise Ambrosius couldn’t react immediately, creating a strange silence. The first to react was a noble behind him— Duke Knut Dixgard. “You... Do you know what you are saying...” “Silence.” Knut who almost lost his composure because of the confusion was interrupted by Ambrosius who regained his senses. The relaxed atmosphere from earlier had changed. Facing the King who was displaying his dignity as the head of state, everyone present stood at attention. “Ernesti, you mentioned the production method of the ether reactor? That is surprising, asking me is the only way of getting your hands on it, but normal people won’t want such a thing. And so I have to ask— what do you plan to do with this knowledge?” The King squinted his eyes, silently pressuring Eru. Cold sweat was falling from Eru’s back, but he looked back with a steel resolve. “Right or wrong aside... state your reason. Why do you want such a thing?” “Yes, I... am currently studying in Laihiala with being a pilot as a goal, but I really wanted to have my own Silhouette Knight.” “Oh, a personal Silhouette Knight. What a grand aspiration. That is understandable; why not ask

for it now? It just might come true.” Listening to Ambrosius’ words, Eru shook his head. “In the past, I just wanted my own Silhouette Knight, but it’s different now. I... I wish to ‘use my own hands to create’ the best Silhouette Knight that belongs to just me.” Another answer that went beyond his imagination made the King dumbstruck. At this moment, something he read in the report came to mind. ‘Changing the magius engine’s script by himself’ huh? Is this boy serious? He is not kidding, and really hopes to do that?... He had that capability? Facing the silent Ambrosius, Eru continued to explain: “This is the reason why I seek knowledge from all fields in Laihiala Pilot Academy. Getting magical knowledge, learning the construction and piloting methods of the Silhouette Knights. I had already investigated the technique of constructing the machine frame, but I am still missing a crucial part. That’s right, the ether reactor. As Your Majesty already knows, the method is not available to normal citizens. Hence, when you mention a reward, I hope you could teach me the production method. If I know how, the next thing would be constructing it.” Lauri looked at his grandson explain to the King worriedly. He knew Eru was passionate about Silhouette Knights, but he didn’t think Eru would put caution to the wind and request for it at such a juncture. The situation had already progressed to this stage; it would be hard to help Eru. Lauri glanced at the King and saw that Ambrosius made a serious expression and said heavily: “... And so, your reason is?” “Because it’s my hobby.” Everyone present acted as if they saw something strange and had a complicated expression. In this silence, a faint suppressed laughter was suddenly heard, making everyone look over in shock. Ambrosius’ shoulders were trembling silently, and he suddenly burst out in laughter. “How... ha! Ridiculous! To say it’s a hobby! Hahaha! This is interesting! To seek the classified secret of a nation because of a hobby! Are you really a twelve year old kid? Ke haha! Magnificent. I have not met such an interesting person like you for a long time!” The two nobles watched the King laugh uncontrollably in shocked silence. Lauri who knew the King the longest could tell he was amused for real and relaxed. “Fine, I will grant your wish!” “Wha... Your Majesty, you mustn’t! That’s not something you can teach an unknown child!” “I know where he came from; he is the grandson of my friend. That might be so, but it’s only natural for you to worry... right? Ernesti.” After Eru finished his explanation, he watched the situation unfold silently. When he heard Ambrosius say that, Eru tensed his face. “I will grant your request. But, this is a classified secret. The mere accomplishment of taking down the Behemoth isn’t enough.” Eru’s expression turned to doubt. The King accepted the proposal, but commented the accomplishment wasn’t enough. This made Eru doubt the King’s intention. Ambrosius saw the doubt flash across Eru’s face and revealed a joyous smile. “Don’t worry, a king wouldn’t lie. I guarantee you that when you have met the adequate amount of accomplishments, I will pass the knowledge onto you.” This could be interpreted as using a reward as bait, and asking me to work for free... But, it is still an unexpected gain. Forget the terms for now, this is a chance to learn a critical secret. This reward was worth more than 10,000 in cash to Eru. The cute smiling expression was burning with desire and passion. Ambrosius was certain his plan was right after seeing Eru’s face. “Keke, putting it this way seems a bit empty. I will determine the means. You said you wanted to create Silhouette Knights? Well then, show me your worth— prove that you can use the knowledge of creating ether reactors.” “Prove... please tell me what should I do?” “Just create a Silhouette Knight would be enough. Apart from the reactor, make the casing of the best Silhouette Knight in your opinion for me to see. If I am

satisfied, I will make this wish of yours come true.” When Eru heard these words, his expression was like a predator that had found its prey. The King used the final part Eru needed as the goal. And to Eru, it was something he was going to do sooner or later. And of course, he accepted without hesitation. “By your command. I will prepare a Silhouette Knight that would satisfy Your Majesty.” Shortly after the audience with Ernesti ended, Ambrosius went to a private room of the King that wasn’t a meeting or audience hall. There was another man in the room— Lauri. “Keke, it’s been a long time since I had such a fruitful day. Lauri, your grandson is really interesting.” When he remembered what happened just now, Ambrosius who was a little drunk would smile. “Sigh, I left his upbringing to my daughter completely. That child had always loved Silhouette Knights, but I didn’t know he would bring it so far. I couldn’t grasp the situation and was dripping with cold sweat.” “I heard a twelve year old child fought with the Behemoth, so I summoned him to take a look. But you can’t say he is a child anymore.” “Ara, my grandson is still at school, though.” “Children have to be ambitious, but who would come out with such a weird request? I had heard so many requests all these years, but the request today was ‘superb’!” The two of them clinked their wine glass and continued chatting in high spirits.

“Because it was too interesting, I accidentally made a happy promise.” “Because it’s my grandson. I will work hard to nurture him and won’t let Your Majesty down.” “Yes. That’s right; I was worried about his future because he was too capable. But after meeting him, I realised that was unnecessary.” Ambrosius probably thought of that time again as he let out a soft laugh from his throat. “Ara, for Your Majesty to have such high expectations, my grandson is quite promising.” “Kekeke, I am not interested in him because he is your grandchild, I am curious on what surprising things he would do. Making a better Silhouette Knight— An absurd task, but he accepted without hesitation.” As he spoke, Ambrosius suddenly had a precognition that was something similar to a belief. “It probably wouldn’t be long before he brings the results before me.” “... To make such a promise lightly. I have to advise His Majesty to curb his desire for amusement.” One of the nobles that were present during the audience, Duke Knut Dixgard’s complained to his counterpart Marquis Joachim Serrati. “Watch your words, Duke.” “His Majesty isn’t so petty that he wouldn’t accept advice. Or do you think its fine to disclose a national secret to a suspicious child?” “I don’t think so... that is why His Majesty added these terms. Even if he is the grandson of the Laihiala Pilot Academy’s dean, it is not easy to make a new Silhouette Knight.” “I am not talking about how hard it is, I am saying there is something wrong with the promise itself!” Knut was indignant, taking heavy steps as he passed through the corridor. Joachim who was following him saw the figures of his children in his mind. Supplements of the report of, Jantunen’s Knight Commander Philip Hallhagen, was done by his daughter — Stefania. The report included how his bastard children were close to Eru. In the end, Eru was someone he knew. It might be necessary to gather some intelligence, or issue some instructions to his illegitimate children. Besides Joachim who was deep in thought, Knut’s expression was becoming serious. “Even though he is still a child... It’s dangerous to leave him alone.” These words weren’t heard by anyone, dissipating into the air quietly.

Take your favorite novel wherever you go
novelepubs.xyz

Knights & Magic - Volume 2 - Chapter 10

Laihiala Pilot Academy was the largest educational facility in the Fremmevira Kingdom. It conducts the pilot training programme, and naturally has maintenance facilities to support the usage of the Silhouette Knight on campus. Included are the inner skeleton, outer skin, parts crafting and the linKing of crystal tissue, a place to assemble all the parts; all these facilities are named as a whole as the ‘workshop’. In order to service the ten metre tall humanoid weapon— Silhouette Knights, the interior of the workshop was spacious. Situated at the edge was the maintenance platform shaped like a gigantic chair. A Silhouette Knight was placed on it, and a large group of students were doing maintenance work. The unarmoured arm of the Silhouette Knight was placed on a truck to be transported. The sound of hammers pounding the giant armour into shape could be heard. There was noise everywhere and some of the people were even bickering. A burly man headed past the frantically workIng students with heavy steps. No, it was a bit wrong to use burly as the description. The man was short for his age, but he had a stout body. He was twice as thick as a normal man, giving off a strong sense of presence to the surroundings. This wasn’t because of body fat, but the strong and thick muscles buffing him up. His finely plaited hair flowing down his back and his magnificent beard clearly showed that he was from the crafting race, a dwarf. He approached the squabbling students and silently hit them with his arms that were thicker than a human leg. He held back, but being whacked by a dwarf still made the two of them roll on the floor in pain. “Really, everyone is finding trouble with me at such a busy time!! If you have time to talk trash, then move your hands!!” “Cough! Bo... Boss! Sorry, we will get back to work right away!!” If a dwarf gets serious, they could crush boulders with their bare hands. It was no joke. You don’t want to get on the bad side of the ‘Boss’ - the leader of the pilot academy’s crafting students. The two who were quarreling nonstop rushed back to their work station. “Stop messing around, half of our Knights were destroyed! I’ve had enough.” The Silhouette Knights that were heavily damaged in the battle with the Behemoth were sent here. It should originally start from repairs, but with most of the machines destroyed with only the core and the frame intact, the school had unanimously agreed to build new ones from scratch. With the knowledge and skill of the maintenance students, constructing new Knights wasn’t too difficult. But it wasn’t just one or two, with so many orders, the workload dramatically increased. They had to get help from people from the craftsmen department; the academy really went all out. Even though there were many Knights to rebuild, priority was given to machines that had more surviving parts. Those that were heavily damaged and needed a lot of work would be worked on later. “... This one would be worked on at the very end.” The Boss stopped before one of the machines. Although all the wreckages were damaged seriously, only that one’s inner skeleton fell completely apart, leaving behind only sparse parts - a terrible sight. The ether reactor and magius engine remaining intact despite the damage was a miracle. “On closer inspection, the

destruction was really thorough. Was it damaged from the mana being exhausted? The inner skeleton is breaking apart.” The Boss was staring at the wreckage seriously for a long while. The students hearing him mumble tilted their heads, unable to comprehend why the Boss was so surprised. “Ah? That should be common right? It can’t be helped if the ether reactor was flattened... Huh?” The student who was speaking doubted his own words, staring intently at the wreckage. The ether reactor was intact, but the mana was depleted, resulting in the inner skeleton falling apart. Seeing this illogical situation, he finally understood why the Boss was puzzled. A new question arose and he asked: “Ah... Did the silver nerves break? What an unusual way of breaking down.” “Oh, that’s right. The way it was destroyed is unique.” The Boss focused on what appeared to be the legs of the wreckage. After removing the armour, the exposed crystal tissue was torn and frayed in the middle. For these experienced craftsmen, this was a familiar symptom: the tissue exceeded its limit and will tear from fatigue sooner or later. That wasn’t surprising, but—“These fellows had all their parts replaced with new ones before they set off, why would it suddenly tear from fatigue? How was it piloted? Weird, this fellow broke down in a weird way.” The Boss grunted and stiffened his face hidden by his beard. His intuition told him that there was something wrong with the wreckage; the way it broke down was obviously different from all the scenarios they had seen before. The maintenance department didn’t just do repairs. If there were any structural improvement that could be made, they would be the ones to implement it. Hence, they have to do their best to understand any underlying problems in the machine. “The name of the machine is Guyale; the Knight runner is that fellow Di... What the hell did he do?” The Boss yelled out loudly, and assigned someone to bring the pilot of this wreckage to him. The Capital of Fremmevira Känkänen had a famous aristocrat district. Most of the nobles who have their own territory also owned a property here. The Serrati Marquis clan also has a mansion here. The twins Archid (Chid) Olter and Adeltrud (Ady) Olter were led by their sister of a different mother, Stefania (Tiffa) Serrati into this place which they hadn’t seen for a long time. The aged butler led these three towards Marquis Joachim Serrati’s study room. The study had a solemn colour, reflecting the personality of the owner and a steadfast atmosphere. Tiffa who could see him every other day aside, the twins saw their father for the first time in years, their nervousness was clear for all to see. Joachim continued to arrange his documents after they entered; only speaking a few moments later: “Thank you, Tiffa. It’s been quite a while since I saw the both of you. It’s great that both of you are healthy. Is Irma doing well?” “Yes, long time no see, father. Mother has never fallen sick before, she is as fit as a fiddle.”

It’s a bit awkward for a conversation between parent and child, but it’s more than a problem of etiquette. The twins were the illegitimate children of the Marquis, plus their ill relation with the legal wife meant they didn’t have much of a chance to interact with the main family. They seldom talked to their father, Joachim, so both parties weren’t used to this. “Father, I have brought them with me, do you have anything for them?” Tiffa sensed the awkward atmosphere. They had not come out with a way to converse, so getting straight to the point would help them open up with each other. “That’s right... I heard from Tiffa that Archid and Adeltrud have a friend named Ernesti Echevarria, right?” They never imagined that they would hear this name from Joachim. Not just the twins, even Tiffa had a surprised expression. “How is he as a person? Do tell me what you know, go on.” Their father’s tone was beyond debate. Chid and Ady suppressed their doubts, looked

at each other and described their impression of him: Childhood playmate and their teacher in magic; In terms of magic alone, he should be the top talent within the nation; and his passion towards Silhouette Knight, etc. Even just listening to half of it was enough to shock you, but Joachim did not question and listened quietly. The doubts in the twin's heart grew deeper because they didn't know why their father was interested in Eru. Joachim probably read their doubts from their faces, pondered for a moment and explained: "He was listed as one of the contributors in the battle with the Behemoth. Although there wasn't any awards for him this time, but it was proposed that he should be rewarded for his efforts in the future." "Hmm? This means that Eru's contribution would be properly acknowledged!?" "Don't be hasty, it's not something that would be decided immediately, it would depend on his performance from now on." Eru who risked his life in the 'Behemoth Incident' wasn't recognised or rewarded after the situation was resolved. Eru himself might be fine with it, and he did give up on it without much hassle, but the twins couldn't accept it. Those who actually watched would definitely know. That might be the reason why Chid became closer to the father he wasn't good at dealing with. Joachim was strict, but he wasn't unreasonable. "But father, you said it would depend on his performance, so what should we do?"

"Simple. Just tell me if he accomplishes anything from now on. Understand?" "Yes, father!" The joy on Chid and Ady's face were easy to see, the tense atmosphere of the visit had also dissipated. The twins were close to Eru and were sure that he would make it 'big' one day. If they tell their father at that time, Eru's strength would be recognised. They had always been relying on Eru, so this was some form of paying him back. Tiffa had a gentle smile too. She also thought that it was wrong to overlook Eru's accomplishment, so her feeling in wanting to help was the same. Joachim didn't change his expression as he watched the cheerful children. For a whole week after the Behemoth incident, Laihiala Pilot Academy stopped their classes. As the event overlapped with the field trip, many middle schoolers were injured, there were even deaths among the pilot cadets in high school. The school thus needed time to attend to this situation. In this sudden holiday, the students who were safe and sound spent their time freely. Some visited their parents back home; some relaxed in their hostel; others used the chance to play as much as possible. As for Ernesti— The Echevarria mansion was situated near Laihiala Academy City. In one of the rooms in the mansion, Eru was concentrating before a desk, writing down something. The evening sun shined through the windows, only the sound of the tip of the pen touching the paper could be heard. "... Hmm— that should be the rough structure of it. He had just completed a section and returned the pen back into the ink bottle. Eru stretched in satisfaction, rotated his stiff shoulders and leaned back onto the chair. The words on the notebook were tidy, detailing the design theory he had learned in class, his thoughts from observing other pilots and most importantly, the ideas he came up with while piloting, which included his memories from his previous life. This notebook could be described as 'book of terrifying knowledge of a different world'. The last page had the freshly finished sketch of the machine based on these notes. "With this, I could complete the promise I made with those two... What's left is the promise with His Majesty." He crossed his arms as he mumbled to himself, falling deep in thought once again. He was troubled over the promise he made with the King a few days ago. 'Constructing the best Silhouette Knight'— the content of the promise coincided with Eru's goal, but there hadn't been any progress. "There are mountains of problems. There are tons of difficulties when making a

Silhouette Knight... making a Silhouette Knight... Silhouette Knight..." The temptation crept into his mind when he relaxed, tunneling into a corner of his mind. It spread rapidly like an ink drop in water, taking over his mind. Shortly after, Eru couldn't resist the temptation and said it out loud: "Wahh, Silhouette Knight, I want to pilot a Silhouette Knight..." The worse thing was thinking about related matters. The more Eru tried to not think about it, the more rooted it became in his head. Furthermore, piloting a real Silhouette Knight was actually a great stroke of luck. Closing his eyes, Eru could see that scene before him again—the metallic legs following his command, the strong pace sending strong vibrations; the friction the arm made when it swung the several meters long sword; the inertia he felt whenever he entered the command to move forward; the fight with the powerful giant beast. All these experiences and memories assaulted Eru in the form of an illusion. "Ughh, I want to pilot some more, just riding for that short while wasn't enough..." That might be so, but Silhouette Knights were not something that you could pilot and run around in. Eru was just a middle school student. Remembering this fact, he laid down on the table meekly. "No good... I can't work like this. At such a time, I need to go out for a walk." He propped himself up, running out onto the streets once he was ready. Some time later, Eru showed up at the smithery 'Termonen Workshop' which was situated in Laihiala Academy City. He came to visit one of his childhood friends, the young dwarf Batson Termonen. As the son of a smithery owner, he should be working to inherit the family business. But after having this strange friend that likes Silhouette Knight a little too much, he had slowly drifted onto the path of a Silhouette Knight craftsman. With this background, they had been acting like a Silhouette Knight fan group. "... That's what happened. I will be building a better Silhouette Knight and present it to His Majesty." "What 'present it to His Majesty'? Why does it suddenly look like a request from the King!? I don't know what to say to you, there should be a gradual progress in events..." Eru who strongly believed that the completion day would come chattered cheerfully while Batson just brushed it off casually. Batson thought Eru was going on a field trip, but in the end Eru exchanged blows with the Behemoth; Batson thought Eru had safely returned, but he made such a ridiculous promise with the King. Eru's actions had been unpredictable over the years. Batson sighed deeply, giving up on retorting each point. "...Eh, forget it. This suits your style, too. So what are your plans? Do you have an idea about the new Silhouette Knight?" "No." "Hey." Eru's firm reply made Batson almost fall over. Batson thought Eru had a plan from his confident demeanour. "If you ask me what I want to create, I do have lots of ideas. But the problem of where to build it hasn't been solved. How about constructing it at your place?" "Of course not!" Silhouette Knights were about ten metres tall, a giant robot made from metal, crystal and magic armaments. It requires large facilities, not something you can make in a workshop in town. "Can't you accommodate this? Aren't we comrades?" "I don't care if you are a comrade or a friend, no means no!" As the two of them were chattering happily, the door of Batson's room was suddenly opened with a strong force. Both of them were shocked as they turned to look at Batson's father. He worked long years as a craftsman and had the feature of a dwarf too. His strong body was full of solid muscles, and his fierce bearded face looked just like a demon's. He was emitting a dangerous aura, pushing them back several steps. "You two... Didn't I say don't be noisy, it would interfere with work?! If you want to be noisy, do it outside!!" Without waiting for him to finish, the two of them leapt out the window. They didn't hesitate even though Batson's room was on the second floor. Eru who jumped first

landed smoothly and used Air Cushion to catch Batson who jumped next. Their movements were unusually practiced, as if they had probably done this several times before. “Eh, we were chased out. What do we do, Batson?” “Dad is fierce, it can’t be helped. Ah, how about going to the Pilot faculty’s workshop?” Eru didn’t understand why Batson made this suggestion and tilted his head. “Didn’t a bunch of Silhouette Knights get totaled in the recent battle? They should be repairing them now, let’s ask them to let us observe.” “I get it, that’s a great idea, let’s go, then!” Eru cheered himself up and ran in the direction of Laihiala Pilot Academy, with Batson chasing behind. It was past noon in Laihiala Academy City. The two of them reached the campus and were passing through the school gate when they heard someone calling for them. “Hee, found him.” “Caught Eru—!!” The ones who grabbed Eru’s arms were Chid and Ady. Because they were both taller than Eru, Eru whose arms were caught couldn’t touch the ground. “Eh- Chid, Ady? What is it? This is so sudden.” “Nothing, how should I put it, we guessed that Eru would be here.” “Since we guessed right, we should catch him! Well then, where should we go next?” The two of them seemed to be grabbing Eru just for the fun of it. Eru swung his legs hanging in mid air and sighed depressedly. “... I was thinking that the workshop of the pilot school are conducting the repairs of the Silhouette Knights, so I wanted to observe.” “Is that so? Let’s hurry there immediately!” “It’s fine to go along, you two. But it’s about time you put me down.” And so, the four of them headed towards the workshop of the pilot school. Although they were just in their first year of middle school, they were already familiar with the layout of the campus and reached there in no time. They sneakily peeped at the insides of the workshop. The knocking sound of hammers, the rollers of cranes, the angry shouts and the roar of the Silhouette Knight’s engine. It was noisy inside. Eru wanted very much to get closer to watch, but the frightening focus of the craftsmen made them feel bad about intruding. Hence the group slowly moved to a spot where no one was working. And, they came to the side of the machines that suffered devastating damage and would be dealt with later. At the rear of the workshop was a giant chair for Silhouette Knight maintenance. On it were iron pieces that could only be described as wreckage being lifted by a crane. That was probably the torso of a Silhouette Knight. As the exterior had caved in, the inner skeleton was also warped. Leaving Eru and Batson aside, the twins couldn’t comprehend what it was for a moment. Thankfully, there were scraps of red paint as clues, which led them to think about the original form of that machine. “That is... eh, could it be Guyale that was piloted by Eru?” Chid observed the profile of Eru who was gazing at the wreckage and mumbled a question. “Correct. I remember the armour and the way it was damaged. It is completely wrecked... No wonder they are putting it off until later.” “Amazing, what did you do to destroy it until it looks like that.” Ignoring Batson who was stunned, Ady stared at the completely totaled wreckage and seemed to be in a trance. The thing before her could tell her wordlessly just how desperate the battle with the Behemoth was. Even the twins who had never piloted a Silhouette Knight could imagine it easily. When they heard Eru talk about the incident in the past, both Chid and Ady thought they had understood how dangerous it was. But the wreckage displayed before them was beyond their imagination and made them speechless. The giant lumps of metal were twisted horribly like clay. How large was the force that destroyed it, and how dangerous it was to face it— Chid clenched his fist until it turned white, while Ady was tearing up. One misstep and Eru could have died on that battlefield, which gave them the chills. It couldn’t be helped, but the twins were

terribly frustrated about not doing anything to help during such a crisis. "... Pretty." At this moment, Eru's soft voice spread into the ears of the gloomy twins. They floated up from the sea of regret and turned towards Eru slowly. "Even a destroyed robot is so pretty..."



Eru sighed, his profile looked so charmed. He didn't realise the atmosphere around him was turning icy and said: "That's right, when something with a form breaks apart and leaves only wreckage behind, it is known as the 'elegance of silence'. The air of defeat and loneliness... Is so pretty..." The eyes of the twins met for a split second, the 132nd session of the Olters siblings' conference ended with a consensus— they decided wordlessly to attack Eru. "!? Ick... Ick hwurts ick hwurts, wife areth youth dowing!!" Eru's cheeks were been pulled hard, making him protest loudly in tears. The twins continued pinching without letting up. "Eh, you can't blame them, Eru..." Batson watched calmly from the side by himself. "Hey, where did you brats come from?! Stop making a racket here!!" The twins pinched for a moment longer before letting go. Eru who was finally liberated nursed his cheeks and was about to protest when a roar came from behind him. It was loud enough to be heard over the other noises in the workshop. They turned to see a dwarf youth with a strong presence — the Boss, David Hepken. "Oh? Isn't that the silver boy? You really like it here, huh, but don't disturb our work." The Boss knew Eru, who was hanging around the pilot school as if it was normal. And, he was even here when school was out. Even the Boss was stunned. Eru looked past him at the person standing behind him. That face was as pale as a ghost, under the eyes were thick eye bags. His carefully combed blond hair was a mess— the official pilot of the red Knight, Dietrich Cunitz. For a moment, Eru couldn't identify him with the Dietrich in his memories and rubbed his eyes. But no matter how he looked at him, the Dietrich before him was in a distracted and terrible state. His arrogance and cockiness were gone, with frustration and gloom taking its place. "Eh, umm... Dietrich... Senpai? Right? What happened?" Eru asked with a stiff smile that lacked confidence. Dietrich's face looked so down that even Eru was troubled. Dietrich responded with an ugly smile and said hoarsely: "... Ahh, Ernesti. Ke keke... a little... right, just a little. I have been having nightmares recently... The demons from the infirmary chasing me... which made me lose sleep. If I let my guard down just a little... Ugh, that person acting cute with a terrifying voice, pui!" As he spoke, it spurred the memories of his nightmares. Dietrich's eyes lost focus and seemed to be drifting off to the other world— The Boss gave him a chop to the head, pulling him back. Dietrich blacked out for a moment and then woke up. The Boss' chop probably worked. "Ugh, oh, oh... Ah! Where am I...? Wah! Eh, forget it. Since Ernesti is summoned here to explain, too, right? That makes it easier." "Ahh? What does the boy need to explain?" "What else, you want to know the reason why Guyale broke down right? Isn't that why you asked the 'reason' to come here?" The Boss looked between Dietrich and Eru's face for a long while, slowly getting what his words meant. His frown became even deeper. "Wait. Di, from what I am hearing, that boy seems to be the reason why Guyale broke down?" "Eh? Isn't that... You asked him to come without knowing that?" "No, I didn't look for him, he just showed up by himself." The conversation didn't match and all three of them tilted their heads simultaneously. In the space of these few seconds, Dietrich seemed to have noticed something and clapped his hands together. "Ah, did I let something slip?" "I think that's what happened." The Boss stroked his beard out of habit and looked at the two of them with sharp eyes. "Ah, never mind. Just tell me everything." Seeing the Boss smiling deviously as he cracked his bones loudly, no one present had the

guts to object. When Eru was piloting Guyale in the fight against the Behemoth, Dietrich was watching from behind, so he didn't have any ideas on how he piloted. Eru's skills were not something that could be understood through observation, so he had to do the explaining. It was fine in the beginning, but they ran into problems immediately. "... Pardon, say that again." "Okay. I took the seat, but my limbs couldn't reach the controls and pedals, so I read it through the script in the magius engine and controlled the Silhouette Knight by 'processing it myself'." The Boss, who always had a scary face, opened his eyes wide in surprise, a rare sight. That was understandable; the magius engine exists because it was impossible for a person to keep up with the script processing. Doing the processing by yourself goes beyond common sense. Dietrich who experienced the movement of Guyale firsthand aside, no one could have stopped the Boss' expression from turning doubtful. Dietrich's expression, on the other hand, turned sharp. "... Even if I believe everything you said is true, then what? What does it have to do with this fellow breaking apart because of mana depletion?" "I took the place of the magius engine, which meant I could control all functions of the machine freely. When I was delivering the final blow to the Behemoth, I turned off the safety device, using all my remaining mana in that attack. In the end, I accidentally used up the mana that was keeping the structure intact." "Damn it! How do you want me to resolve the issue that way!! The limiter was meant to keep the mana from depleting completely!" The Boss had a stern tone, but he could only shake his head at Eru's recklessness. He breathed out a sigh that was exceptionally heavy, and gave up on lecturing Eru. "That might be so, but I am the only one who can control it that way, so you are not in a hurry to solve this, right?" "Of course, it would be a disaster if it could be done easily!! Forget it. And the crystal tissue snapping from fatigue was related to you, too, right? No, you broke it right?" "You are right... But being told that in my face still makes me unhappy." "Can it, so it really is your fault!!" "That was the burden of full control. Guyale was under an abnormal amount of strain and broke. This made our situation desperate, too." "You... After replacing it with new parts, it should operate smoothly for more than a month. But you broke it in just one battle..." The Boss couldn't help looking up and covering his forehead with his palm. At this point, he couldn't do anything about it. The work on hand was already a headache, but he noticed the possibility of something worse happening. "Hey, wait. Boy, if you get serious, would all the machines you pilot get destroyed?" "The possibility is high. The Karrdator operated by the Knights has better crystal tissue, so it would probably last longer." So it's a problem of bearing the load— Eru grumbled casually. The Boss glanced at him through slitted eyes and his face turned sour. "Tch! If I don't improve this, I would lose face as a craftsman. That might be so, but I can't solve the problem immediately." Speaking of which, pilots that would be so reckless were unheard of, so it's natural for the solution to not exist. Anyway, this was not a problem this facility could tackle. Finding an answer to improve the design was not something you could settle it in one day. The repairs would be left for later, the research to solve this issue would be done later — the Boss secretly came up with a plan. Unfortunately, there was someone who treats unrealistic options as something normal. "If that is so, I just happen to have a great idea! And there is no downside to it—the most important thing right now is increasing the toughness of the crystal tissue, right?" That person was Eru. He raised his hand cheerfully, saying something shocking in a loud voice. "Huh? Increase the toughness of the crystal tissue? That is easy to say, but how long do you think alchemists spent researching that? In fact, there has been no

breakthrough for the past hundred years.” “Ah, no. When I say increasing toughness, I am not referring to the crystal tissue itself. I lack the expertise on alchemy anyway, so I want to work on the way crystal tissue is ‘used’.” In the face of the people who were popping out question marks because of the term ‘used’, Eru used this chance to explain: “Here is how an old story goes: ‘One arrow is easy to break, but it is hard to do so when three of them are tied together’. Which means...” His proposal was to bind several crystal tissue together in the form of a ‘rope’, By combining the weak individual strands together, the toughness could be increased. By braiding it together, it could improve its elasticity compared to longer strands and enhance power output. “... I call it ‘strand crystal tissue’. What do you think?” Eru was brimming with smiles, like a salesman concluding his pitch. Following this, he braided the crystal tissue on the spot and presented the flexible ‘rope’ for everyone to see. The twins didn’t seem to understand, just accepting everything Eru said. Batson and the craftsmen present reacted very strongly. The Boss picked up the crystal tissue with a slow and deliberate motion and studied it. He started shaking his hand and then fell deep into thought. With his past experience of attempting to improve the Silhouette Knight, he wanted to say something, but gave up after failing to find the words. The Boss sighed and said: “To combine the crystal tissue through braiding... this is a blind spot.” He was usually serious when talking, but the words he said were filled with mixed emotion. “Is that so? It’s strange that no one ever tried it though.” “The boy is right. It does seem weird hearing you say that... But improving the Silhouette Knight usually starts from the inner skeleton and the placement of the crystal tissue, or enhancing the quality of the materials. No one would think about changing the crystal tissue this way.” Silhouette Knight is a gigantic weapon that mimics a human Knight. Based on the idea of ‘amplifying the power of men’, it had the shape of humans. Although it had the advantage of being easy to pilot and to understand, it also limited new ideas to the human shape, holding back its development. A pure machine that is piloted like a human, this contradiction was rooted deeply into their psyche. The architects of Silhouette Knights lost the idea of making breakthroughs from the very basics. Eru could overcome this because of his knowledge from a different world, where robotics was very developed. Even though his face was covered by his beard, the Boss was smiling happily at this moment, a rare sight. “Haha! After thinking it through, this idea is interesting!! The time is just right, let’s install this thing in that machine we are repairing!!” The bright and cheery Boss made the students take a step back. But the Boss was occupied by the Silhouette Knight’s enhancement project and didn’t mind it one bit, preparing to give the order to the others— “By the way, could I make another suggestion? How about changing the exterior shape too?” — The whisper of the devil came into the Boss’ ears. The Boss digested the meaning of these words and turned back slowly. Before him was Eru, who had a sparkling smile. “Boss, I am thinKING of adding arms onto the back.” The boy looked as cute as a girl, saying words gently while smiling like a flower. But the content was incredible. This couldn’t be described as ‘insufficient explanation’, but more like the realm of insanity. The Boss did hear the words clearly, but it took him a much longer time than before to understand. Even the twins, who were used to Eru’s erratic nature couldn’t hide their bafflement. The one who was most calm was Batson who had heard plenty of his ridiculous ideas. For the craftsmen who didn’t even think about improving the Silhouette Knight until moments ago, Eru’s words were incomprehensible. Logically speaking, Silhouette Knights should be a weapon ‘in the shape of a man’. And in this world, men

usually have two arms and legs. Only characters in fairy tales go beyond this norm, so apart from Eru, no one could understand where the idea of adding arms to the back of the Silhouette Knight came from. The stunned Boss sighed deeply and wanted to retort, but dropped that idea. It would be nonsense if these words came from someone else, but this was coming from Eru who proposed the new idea of the ‘strand crystal tissue’. The Boss suppressed his voice and struggled to keep his heart normal and asked: “... Just to be clear, I should ask to clarify. Why? How?” Even though he was doing his best to suppress it, the Boss couldn’t keep his voice from trembling. “As for why... I discovered the last time I piloted a Silhouette Knight, that they only have two arms.” “Eh? That is obvious, do you need to bring it up? Huh?” “Sigh, calm down Ady. Let me finish... I think the issue lies with the control of the ‘Silhouette arms’. In order to conduct long range attacks, the Silhouette Knight has to use ‘Silhouette arms’. The armaments have to be operated by hands, so there is a need to change between sword and armaments according to distance and the situation.” Eru stopped and looked around. All the faces had the same ‘that is obvious, what is the problem’ expression on them. His smile deepened. “But I think that is inefficient; there would be a gap when changing the weapons, too. Obviously, there is no choice but to store the ‘Silhouette arms’ in close distance combat. So, I am thinKing of putting something at the back... something like a hand that could operate a ‘Silhouette arms’. That way, there would be no need to change weapons and the ‘Silhouette arms’ would be available any time.” Everyone wasn’t buying Eru’s explanation wholesale and had a deeply confused look. They felt something wasn’t right and didn’t know how to express it— In that awkward atmosphere, the one who moved was the leader of the engineers— the Boss. “... I know what you are getting at. Let’s leave how to increase the number of arms aside. If we really do add another arm, how would it be controlled? Humans don’t have arms on their back; I don’t need to explain that right? You can’t control things you don’t have.” Without needing the Boss to point it out, almost everyone was thinking the same thing. Silhouette Knight’s control was based on the movement of the pilot’s limbs. With this system, it was impossible for the pilot to control parts that humans do not have. Wrong, there was no need to bring out structural logic. Emotionally, they were resisting the addition of parts which humans do not have. It would be the best to laugh this off as nonsense— such thoughts were formed silently and were the common thoughts of everyone present. But, Eru’s smile did not disappear, and he didn’t stop his advance. He is a product of an alternate world, journeying alone outside of the common sense of this world, happily redesigning the existence known as Silhouette Knights. “I understand your concerns, but I am not proposing adding a real arm, so it doesn’t have to be as agile as one. In simple terms, it just needs to hold the ‘Silhouette arms’ and shoot, that’s all. Which means...” Eru took in everyone’s confusion and repulsion, describing it casually. The strongest thing that was pushing him was his will and clear objective. Slowly, everyone was convinced by his words. “At the same time, an automated movement script with aiming functions would be added. A device that could control the movement of the ‘Silhouette arms’; this is my proposal... the development of the ‘Back Weapon’ and the ‘Fire Control System’.” There was a small area in the corner of the workshop separated by boards, dubbed the ‘conference room’. Even though Eru’s proposal deviated widely from common sense, the group didn’t reject it and gathered here for a discussion. Eru explained with a clear voice, his chalk making rhythmic sounds on the board, gradually drawing out the whole picture of the alien shaped machine. “Although I

used the word ‘arm’, what I wanted was a simpler design... Something that could hold an object firmly.” The additional arm — named ‘Auxiliary arm’ henceforth— would be kept when the ‘Silhouette arms’ were not in use, and would be deployed when in combat, ready to fire. When deployed, the Auxiliary arm would mount the weapon over the shoulder, facing forward. The Fire Control System is the script responsible for the deployment and the retraction of the Auxiliary arm. This movement doesn’t require much flexibility, it just needs to be able to deploy and retract the Auxiliary arm. Hence, it wouldn’t be a burden on the pilot and could be completed automatically by the system. Just hearing this much, the Fire Control System script seemed to be used only to point the armament forward, but its main feature was the aiming function. Displaying a reticle on the holo monitor, the script links it to the ‘Silhouette arms’ to control the direction of fire. At this point in Eru’s presentation, the expression of the craftsmen changed. To use the ‘Silhouette arms’ without interfering with the use of the hands, it even made the addition of an aiming reticle possible. Although the pilots are the experts in controlling Silhouette Knights, the craftsmen doing maintenance also have the related skills. That’s why they could understand the advantage the ‘Back Weapon’ brings—increasing the opportunity to attack, more variation in tactics, and the possibility of stronger attacks. “The plan is to install the functionality of the fire control script into the unused area of the magius engine. Ah, I will be doing that part. Also, the pilot using this function needs to...” Pilots just need to be trained in using the aiming function. The reason was simple, they do not need delicate control to use the Auxiliary arm, and the Fire Control System would automatically deploy, retract and even aim. The control could be done through the pilot seat easily, so there wasn’t any burden when controlling it. If the pilot needs to adjust to the modification, then the training programme of the pilots needs to be adjusted. “... That’s the summary of the proposal. Further details would be finalised when production begins... How does everyone feel about this?” Facing Eru, who was cutely tilting his head, no one gave a response. Right now, a terrifying silence was controlling the workshop. Eru’s ‘technology’ had turned their perceived common sense on its head: adding parts which deviates from the human form and installing scripts in the untouchable magius engine. Even though they had accepted the idea of strand crystal tissue, Eru’s proposal was very abnormal to the students present. Eru explained himself clearly, the common language of the engineers was displayed on the board — ‘technology’. It had no fantasy or fairy tales, with a taste of reality, it couldn’t be ignored with a laugh; and it was full of charms, making it hard to resist. Seemed like I’ve still got it in me. My presentation skills haven’t gotten rusty. But they still need another push. In Eru’s eyes, the maintenance students were obviously lost. It’s fine if the presentation wasn’t good enough, they could reject it directly. But, the problem was that it was feasible enough to be discussed. Their cultivated common sense was warning them something was wrong, but when Eru brought out the revolution this technology could bring, their logic pulled them to accept it. In order to push the group who were caught in this dilemma and fell into silence, Eru continued: “Even though Silhouette Knight mimics the form of men, it is still a tool, a machine. There is no need to be hung up on it being in the form of men... If there is a function that is needed, don’t you think that it’s fine to modify how it looks?” If a devil appeared in any story, it would probably give off this feeling. A beautiful appearance whispering sweet temptations in your ears, luring you away from the straight and limited path of the world— As everyone’s thought were heading down this divergent path, the Boss sighed in an

exaggerated manner. “Really, just who the hell are you? Be it the strand crystal tissue or the back weapon, I don’t understand how you keep thinking up things we have never seen, or heard of before.” “How should I put it? I want to do it because it doesn’t exist, I wouldn’t have done it if it had already existed.” Eru pouted, prompting the Boss to stare at him for a long while before laughing out loud. The Boss’ hearty laughter swept all the doubts and gloom of everyone, who were present away. “Keke, hahaha! You got me. Yes, you are right! Kick reason to the curb, right? I like it. It might be frustrating, but the boy has a point. We craftsmen are professionals who improve Silhouette Knights. I will accept your proposal!!” With this as the cue, the engineers’ curiosity won against their hesitation. As one, they unanimously moved towards the development of the strand crystal tissue, back weapon and fire control system— a step towards the revolution of a new Silhouette Knight model. It might be a small step, but there was a definite change in their mindset. And so, the ripple that started in Laihiala Pilot Academy will one day spread through the nation, and push the evolution of the existence known as Silhouette Knights to the entire world. Four figures walked in a row in Laihiala Academy City which was basked in the light of the setting sun. The petite one walking in the middle— Eru was in a great mood, and seemed to be on the verge of singing. That was understandable; he didn’t expect to fulfill his ambition of modifying a Silhouette Knight. When he thought about the coming days, Eru felt overwhelming joy. Compared to the chirpy Eru, Chid and Ady beside him seemed gloomy. “Hey Eru, to be honest, I didn’t understand everything that happened today. But if the modification goes well, the Silhouette Knights would become stronger, right?” “Yes, of course!” Chid wanted to say something, but seemed hesitant. “... Eh, Eru... after strengthening the Silhouette Knight, are you going to fight the Demon beast again?” Chid’s words made Eru blink with a stiff smile. Eru’s mind was filled with the ‘modification’, and totally forgot about how to apply it practically. Facing this unexpected query, Eru cleared his throat to dismiss the anxiety in his heart and forced a smile: “That, that’s right. It’s a rare chance to create powerful Silhouette Knights after all, and think about it. And, becoming a Knight or pilot means fighting Demon beasts.” “That’s true, Eru has to fight... and you are ready to do so.” Eru looked surprised by Chid’s hesitant expression, and was hugged from the side by Ady. “E~ru! You didn’t forget that promise, right!!” “Huh? Umm— Yeah. About teaching both of you how to fight with Silhouette Knights, right?” “Correct. If we put our mind to it, we can do it! I absolutely forbid you from fighting alone again.” Ady remembered the wreckage of the red Silhouette Knight. Even though Silhouette Knights were known as the strongest weapon of men, there were still a lot of Demon beasts in this world that were stronger than them. When Ady thought that Eru might be in danger, her tears would blur her vision, and the sounds would blur. “Ady? Are you okay? Don’t worry, I had thought about preparation for that, too... Oh, right! How about asking them to do ‘that’ too?” Eru seemed to be thinking of something and snapped his fingers. Ady lifted her face slightly, while Batson and Chid looked at each other with a confused expression. Several days later, Eru and the Boss came to the Laihiala Pilot Academy’s dean office. Hearing a polite knock, a calm response came from the dean, Lauri Echevarria who was inside. Even though Lauri was a bit surprised, he still ushered them in. “Oh? Eru and David, what a rare combination.” Lauri offered them a seat as Eru gave him some documents. Inside was the report summarising the proposal for the strand crystal tissue, the back weapon and the fire control system. “Dean, the document inside contains the proposal for a Silhouette Knight brought up by the silver boy. The

maintenance department wants to create a new Silhouette Knight using this plan.” Lauri’s eyes were wide open after hearing these sudden words, and studied the documents carefully. After browsing through it once, he placed the documents on the table and exhaled deeply. Lauri looked into the distance and said: “Ara... Should I say this is unexpected... you two have stirred up something troublesome.” “It’s your grandson who did that.” “That’s why it was unexpected... should I say beyond my imagination? I didn’t think that you would start so soon. This report seems very unusual. Eru, can it be done?” Eru smiled like usual when he was asked— But Lauri, who was his family understood that Eru’s blue eyes contained unusual passion, confidence and the will to challenge the norm. And as he expected, Eru nodded strongly in agreement. Your Majesty, my grandson is wilder than I imagined. He will probably go beyond my control “... Grandpa? What do you think? Are you willing to accept it?” “Dean, we should have the freedom in the production and modification of Silhouette Knights. But the ‘core’ of the modification is different from the past, so there would definitely be many problems. That’s why we are seeking official authorisation.” Lauri whose thoughts were somewhere far away— specifically, the Capital, was pulled back because of these words. “Yes. A lot of the Knights had to be reforged because of damage, so the timing is just right. Some failures are acceptable, just do it the way you want to... Hmmm? No, we can’t afford to be slow; we have to finish it quickly. If there are not enough Knights, the pilots won’t be able to practice.” Lauri suddenly slapped his knee. The Behemoth Incident destroyed half the Knights of the Academy. Even at the full strength of twenty, it was not enough for all the pilots in the Academy, and they had to take turns. With half of it gone, it would definitely affect training. “About that, I have another proposal!” Eru raised his hand strongly and opened the briefcase beside him, taking out a notebook. “Hey, so that wasn’t all? You are well prepared, boy...” “I have been thinking about this for quite some time. To conduct Silhouette Knight piloting practice, you have to ride a silhouette Knight. But the number of the important Silhouette Knights is limited, and takes a lot of effort to make new ones... a vicious cycle.” Lauri and the Boss suppressed their doubts and nodded. Eru opened his notebook that was bulging from a lot of sticky tabs and showed them the newest page. “But increasing the number of Silhouette Knight presents another set of problems. First would be the expensive parts, reactors and engines, and the specialised workshop to handle large machines and manpower... Taking the cost into account, there is only one answer.” Lauri and the Boss listened to Eru’s explanation, squeezing together to look at the notebook filled with words. On it was a strange object— A combination of a human skeleton with armour, which was filled with crystal tissue. According to the notes, it was about two and a half metres in height, slightly bigger than a normal person wearing armour. But it was about a quartre the scale of a Silhouette Knight. “That’s right, just make it smaller! That will cut down the work, and the facilities to construct it can be smaller in scale too. In other words, it can be mass produced easily. Silhouette Knights need ether reactors and magius engine because a single person can’t provide the mana and process the script to control such a large body. If the machine is smaller, the burden would be lessened, too... It could be operated by just one person. It doesn’t require the heart units, so the price would definitely be cheaper. If you order one now, you can get another one for free!” Hearing the long sales pitch of Eru, one would suspect him of being a merchant from somewhere. Lauri and the Boss had different reactions. “...Tiny Silhouette Knights? You are not satisfied with the new model, and are plotting that, too!?” “I see, but

this thing sounds interesting. How about it, David? If it goes smoothly, the pilots won't be bored out of their mind." Hearing Lauri say that, the Boss adopted a troubled attitude. "Dean, I have no objection about making this, but making the new model and this at the same time will be too much, in terms of manpower. Even if it is easy to make, we simply can't do both." Constructing the new Silhouette Knight. That is a tedious mission that is troubling when you just to think about it. The Boss and the engineers don't have the spare energy to work on other projects. Without the craftsmen working on it, it doesn't matter how interesting the idea was. But Eru was prepared for this. "Don't worry about this part. The good thing about this is its simplicity compared to Silhouette Knights, and it is easy to make. I think it could be done even without the skills of the Senpais in the high school department." Understanding what Eru was saying, the expression of these two finally went beyond surprise and turned expressionless. The Boss sighed deeply. "Boy, I didn't know you would go that far." The Boss was definitely not complimenting him, but Eru simply smiled in reply.

Knights & Magic - Volume 2 - Chapter 11

The plan proposed by the pilot faculty's maintenance department—breaking out of the mould of repairing Silhouette Knights, they had started the building process of the new machine model for half a month now. During this period, the school had resumed classes, and the middle schooler Ernesti had returned to his usual daily life.

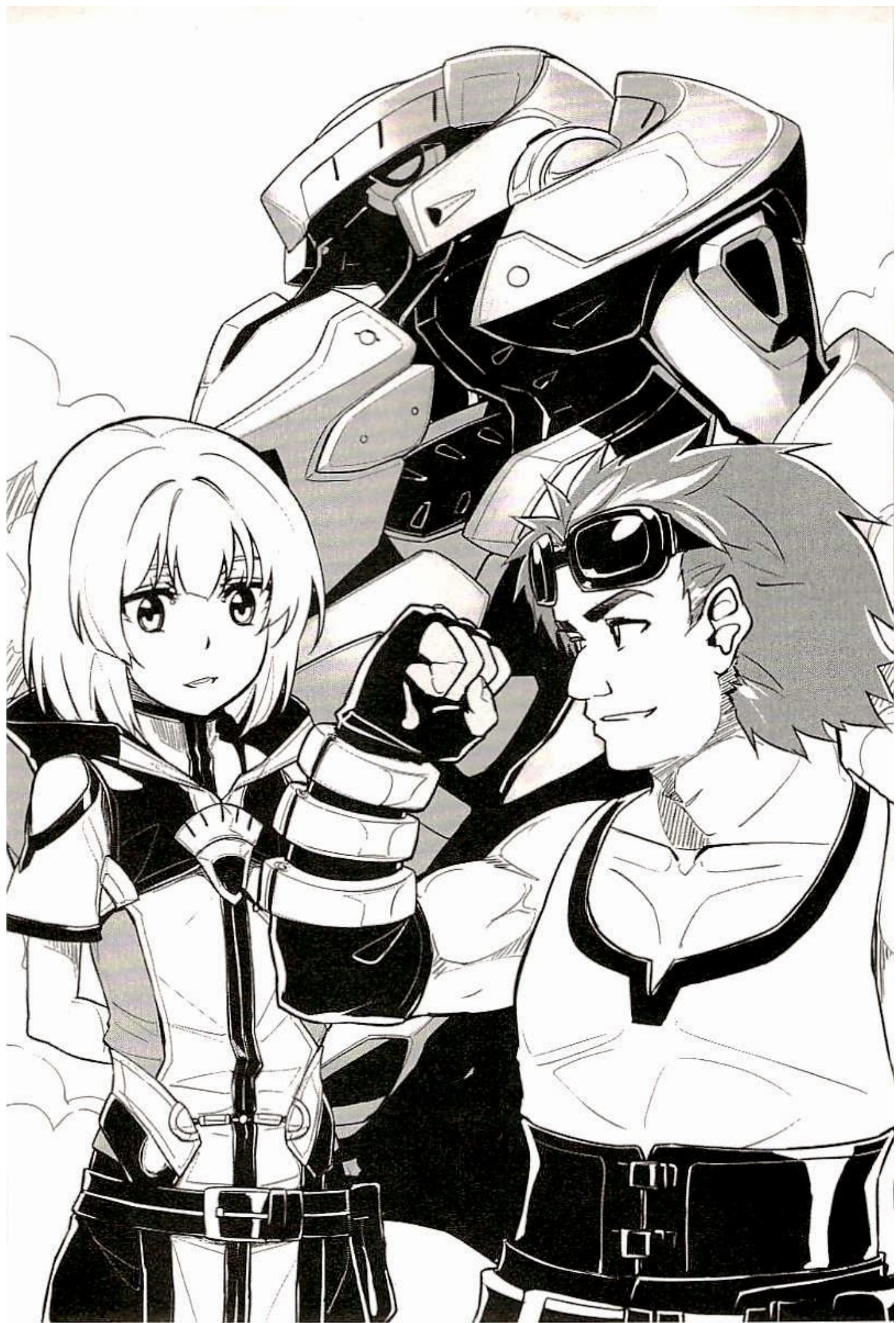
The bell announcing the end of lessons rang, and the classroom that was quiet when class was in session turned rowdy. The teacher sighed at the sudden change in the students and left after bidding farewell. The day's lesson had finished and school was out. The students who were free from class could spend their time as they pleased. Even though they could be attacked by Demon beast if they took a step out of the city, the existence known as students remained the same. It applied to Eru and the others, too, although their situation was different. "Eru, Eru! Let's go practice! Come, we have to work hard today, too!" "Alright, alright, you don't need to pull so hard, I will go with you." Ady couldn't wait as she pulled Eru's hand and Chid followed behind them. They attend classes in middle school during the day, and head for the pilot faculty's workshop when school is out. This was their daily schedule recently. The workshop was noisy as usual. But the situation today was different. Eru and the others who were chattering when they arrived felt the heavy atmosphere. They saw the Boss, who was resting on a chair and approached him. "Hello Boss. Why does everyone look so tired today?" "Ah, silver boy... nothing much, it's just that thing. We made the strand crystal tissue." "The thing suggested by Eru?" "Correct, but... I didn't expect the pilot faculty to need a bobbin machine. The clothing faculty's people insisted that we do it seriously, and showed us no mercy." The Boss' eyes were out of focus, a hint of sorrow that couldn't be described as an achievement. The three of them almost bursted out laughing when they imagined the muscle bound dwarf using a bobbin machine; that must have be hilarious. "Well, thank you for your hard work, Boss." "Thank you, but it was worth it. Nah, look at this." The document the Boss tossed to Eru listed a lot of numbers, listing the difference when using normal crystal tissue compared to strand crystal tissue in different situations. Other than that, there was also comparison data for different braiding methods. During the strand crystal tissue creation process, they discovered that using good braiding methods were more effective than simple braiding. "When I requested the clothing faculty to show me the various ways of braiding crystal tissue, they almost called for a shrink." The information they gathered from their honourable sacrifice was priceless. The best braiding method improved the maximum power output by one and a half times, the tightly braided tissues went through repeated stretching tests, displaying a toughness ten times stronger than before. "It's better than we expected. I thought the output would increase by twenty percent, and the lifespan would be extended two times..." "Ha! You are the proposer, but don't think we didn't do anything. Eh, I don't deny that I am cocky because I attained actual results. I just wanted

to test it out, but the results varied wildly depending on how it was used. I think the parts that were used casually have a lot of room for improvement.” As he spoke, the Boss laughed like an innocent child. Standing next to Eru, it was hard to tell who was the little kid. As the two of them were discussing the results, there was a sudden uproar coming from within the workshop, and someone was shouting for the Boss. “Boss! The replacement for the arm tissue had been completed!” “Oh! I will be right there! ... We are going to test the strand model. Boy, come with us, too.” “Of course, please let me see it!” At the edge of the workshop was a giant figure with some of the armour around the right arm removed, revealing the crystal tissue underneath. The tissues of the arm were thick, which were obviously strand crystal tissue. If the tissue had the same colour as living beings, it would definitely be a scene that was not for the faint-hearted. Fortunately, the crystal tissue was murky white. Placed inside the giant body of the Silhouette Knight, it gave an impression of being a statue. “Alright— Step back! We will be doing test movements! ...Good, please proceed, Helvi!” “Roger. Proceeding now.” The students working in the vicinity dispersed. The pilot, Helvi Öberg entered the machine seated on the repair dock. The hatch in the chest slowly closed with the sound of compressed air. They had already investigated the mana output of the crystal tissue, but this was the first time they were testing it in an actual machine. The eyes of the students in the area were sparkling with anticipation, watching with bated breath. The right arm installed with the strand model gripped a giant metal lump. The Silhouette Knight obeyed the command to lift its arm, and the crystal tissue could be seen contracting and bulging through the gaps of the armour. “Oh... That is amazing.” “Hee— it has great strength, right?” The metal lump lifted by the unit required a normal Silhouette Knight to use both hands in order to lift it. But it accomplished this easily with one hand. The power output of the strand crystal tissue was incredible. Maybe it was because of the unique nature of the strand model, or the lack of outer skin, but cracking sounds could be heard. “Power output increment and toughness enhancement seem to be proceeding fine.”

“Right, now we can produce a machine that won’t break down easily even if the boy pilots it.” As Eru and the Boss were passionately discussing the experiment results, a sound was getting louder, and a noise that didn’t seem to be from the crystal tissue could be heard. “By the way Boss, do you hear something? It sounds like... friction.” “What a coincidence, you heard that, too? So, I didn’t imagine that... What did you say?” The two looked at each other and the instant they turned towards the machine— they heard a crisp bang, and the right arm literally ‘broke’. The crystal tissue fell off and the arm loosened, dropping the metal lump onto the ground. But no one cared about that. The reason was that the armour was sent flying by the snapped crystal tissue, scattering all over. It’s no joke if you get hit by the armour fragments of Silhouette Knight, and hellish screams erupted in the workshop. “Wahhhhhh!? Ah, it’s coming this way...!!” Unfortunately, one of it flew towards the Boss. Eru stepped before him in the nick of time, drawing his gun staff, Winchester to repel the fragments. Eru lowered his stance, shooting out a massive amount of compressed air, deflecting the force of the fragments away. The fragment made a dull explosive sound, drawing a large arc in the air before embedding itself in the wall behind them. The Boss who was in the pilot faculty was a craftsman, together with the lack of agility of the dwarves, it’s impossible to expect an immediate reaction. He shielded his body and stood stiffly in place like a statue. After a while, the Boss looked at the fragment stuck in the wall behind him. After seeing the fragment embedded deep in the

wall, the Boss couldn't utter a sound. Chid and Ady also maintained their position with their bayonet staffs out, the place was awkwardly silent. The Boss returned to his senses in no time and immediately inspected the machine that exploded. The right hand was wrecked from the impact and looked terrible. The crystal tissue was scattered all over the place, even the inner skeleton was visible. Eru timidly asked the Boss, who was enthusiastically inspecting the right arm: "... Boss, do tell us what you think." "Ah— Right there. The crystal tissue itself is fine, but the base securing it to the structure snapped. The tissue increased the output too high, so the other parts couldn't keep up. So, that's why. Ara, we really lost to it." The Boss who was laughing dryly shut his mouth shortly after. After meeting Eru's gaze, the two of them sighed deeply. "Normal means wouldn't work; we would need to modify the entire body this time." Even though the machine was damaged, miraculously, no one was hurt because it was kept at a distance. The students who crawled out cautiously sighed as they looked at the wrecked right arm. Strand crystal tissue still had a way to go before practical application. Anyway, they have to reevaluate and use new methods to secure the tissues. It takes time going through the reevaluation from the beginning, the personnel involved in the designs would be busy for the foreseeable future. "Well then Boss, I will leave this to you... we will go ahead with our training." "You take care of 'that side' for now. Okay... Hey, stop standing around!! We are starting over with strengthening the clamps!!" He looked a bit down, but the Boss didn't give up and threw himself into the work at hand. Eru left the workshop that was getting noisy because of the repairs, following Chid and Ady to another corner of the workshop. There were no Silhouette Knights there; instead there were several 'full body armour' that had interesting designs. Its height was big for a human, but it was just two and a half metres, small for a Silhouette Knight. The head and body were similar to a normal full body armour, the limbs were exceptionally long, and the ratio was off. "Hello — Batson, how are things going?" "Oh, Eru. No problem, the 'Silhouette Gear' is in top condition today, too. I can vouch for that."

Batson answered as he flexed the muscles in his arm. The name for this full body armour was 'Silhouette Gear', a substitute for a Silhouette Knight made through the plans proposed by Eru, it could be considered as a mini Silhouette Knight.



The row of Silhouette Gears was being worked on by students other than Batson. From their height, it was obvious that they were not from the high school department, but middle schoolers. The main point of the Silhouette Gear design was the ‘miniaturising and simplification of Silhouette Knights’, so the difficulty level was low, even middle schoolers, who were aiming to be craftsmen could build it. Batson being involved was a good example, but he had already made a bunch of weird stuff because of his acquaintance with Eru. “Well then, we will work hard for our training-” Eru just finished talking when Chid and Ady replied energetically. Speaking of which, the Silhouette Gear was something he thought up in order to teach them how to pilot a Silhouette Knight, and was used to solve the issue of insufficient machines on campus. Chid and Ady were full of spirit, but so was Eru. For him, even though it was smaller, piloting a robot still made him happy. Silhouette Gear was similar to normal armour; the movements were dictated directly by the user, and needed to be built to the user’s size. For example, Eru was using a machine that had been adjusted for a person with small stature to use; Chid and Ady’s machine were slightly bigger. Eru stood before the Silhouette Gear that was kneeling on the ground with the chest armour open, but he didn’t board it immediately and hugged the torso instead. Seeing Eru smiling with his mouth open, Chid who was behind couldn’t help saying: “I know you like it, but no matter how much love you shower it with, it won’t respond to you.” “No such thing. If you shower it with love, it would be obedient to you.” Chid looked at his Silhouette Gear in doubt. Is that really true? How could it be? A weird argument flashed across his mind. “... No, no way!” Chid came to his senses when he was just about to be convinced. “Ughh, Eru only loves Silhouette Gear. Sigh, Chid, shut up and board it! Training, we are starting training now!” “Eh? Oh, alright... Is this my fault...?” Chid was rushed by Ady who had already boarded, grumbling slightly as he sat in one of the gears. With the metal closing shut, the sound of air escaping could be heard, and the full body armor was enclosed and secured. Chid then grabbed the control inside the Silhouette Gear’s arm, moving the machine’s limbs directly as he controlled it with a script at the same time. The Silhouette Gear was designed to be controlled in the same way as Silhouette Knights for training purposes. “I am starting it...” He started using the unique organs common to all beings in this world—the magius circuit domain to construct a script. The crystal tissue installed inside the gear obeyed the script and the flowing mana, and started to contract and expand. The gear trembled, and stood up a moment later. The mana they put in during activation would be used to move the gear, a machine that directly converted mana into physical movement. They rode the Silhouette Gear and noisily walked outside the workshop. After making their way to the training ground behind, there were already some other guest there. “Hello, Edgar-senpai. How does it feel using that?” “Ahh! Ernesti... Hah! Ke!... You could tell just by looking, right?” The pilot cadet belonging to the pilot faculty, Edgar C. Blanche was piloting a gear that was made for a tall person. He greeted them as he lifted the legs to walk in large strides. His movements were rough and seemed to take a lot of effort. He was not as good as Eru, who could ride the Silhouette Gear like it was second nature, Edgar was still really serious about it. “I see, that looks interesting!” Eru nodded as he watched Edgar. Edgar stiffened his already serious face and looked up slightly. Eru knew he had a hard time piloting, but

for Eru, ‘the hardship of piloting a robot = a happy thing’. Because Eru thought that from the bottom of his heart, Eru was hard to deal with. Edgar understood that and gave up convincing him. Instead, he crossed his arms and brought something else up. “Hey Ernesti, I have been thinking about this. This Silhouette Gear isn’t bad, but I think... It’s too hard to use!!” Edgar had a hard time piloting it because of the control method. Controlling with his actual limbs and script at the same time wasn’t a problem; the issue was the type of magic used. Piloting requires high level magic ‘physical boost’, even a top class pilot cadet like him couldn’t do it well, it’s even worse for normal cadets. “The necessary controls are too complicated. The script controlling Silhouette Knights requires less burden than this... It’s not unusable, but definitely not for pilot training. In fact, everyone had already given up.” Edgar surveyed the training grounds. There were just a few others apart from him. Everybody was complaining after trying it a few times. “Yes—you are right. I underestimated the difficulty level.” “Then make it up with hard work! Nah, look at me Senpai, we can do this.” Edgar looked at Eru, Chid and Ady in turns and sighed softly. Chid and Ady didn’t care about the high school pilots, controlling the Silhouette Knight with ease. This was the result of them learning magic from Eru and training together, but others would only lump them together with Eru as abnormal people. “Don’t ask the impossible; this is not something that could be done in a day or two, right? Really... I know how weird you guys are. At this point, I won’t say anything more, just don’t expect normal people to catch up with you guys.” “Hmm- ugh... it’s a pity, but this can’t be used.” “That would be true if there are no improvements. This is a mini version of a Silhouette Knight, right? Then install a magius engine. That should cut down on the piloting burden drastically.” Edgar told Eru his suggestion. It made sense, if this goes on; it won’t be usable for the high schoolers, although it’s fine for Eru and the others. “Hmmm- that’s the only way... This would increase the cost, but it can’t be helped, so that’s the only option.” But this method presented its own set of problems. The small frame of the Silhouette Gear couldn’t hold the ether reactor of the Silhouette Knight. The main idea was the miniaturisation of the machine, but no matter how much of a genius Eru was, he didn’t know the structure of the magius engine. So this problem couldn’t be resolved immediately. “Ke! What a pitiful sight, Edgar! As the top Knight of the pilot faculty, I didn’t expect you to give up so easily!” Hearing a voice coming from behind him, Edgar turned his head. Before him was Dietrich who was slowly walking towards him in a Silhouette Gear, with movements more refined than Edgar. “... Di, it’s rare to see you so fired up.” Unexpectedly, Dietrich was serious about learning how to control the Silhouette Gear. His movement was smoother than Edgar, while Edgar appeared a bit frustrated. Dietrich who was feeling great about that worked harder. As he was preparing to take a large step—tragedy struck. “Hmmp, this level is easy... Eh? What? This is bad, I can’t stop—!?” Although his movement was crisper than Edgar, Dietrich hadn’t mastered it. Because he used too much strength and made a mistake in the controls, the upper torso cracked loudly and bent at an impossible angle. Everyone who saw this had an anxious expression. “Di-senpai? Wah, it’s an emergency, send Senpai to the ‘infirmary’...” When the panicking Eru mentioned the taboo word, Dietrich recovered with amazing spirit. Not just that, he even spun around gracefully and struck a strange pose, saying curtly: “I, will definitely not go to the infirmary! This, this is nothing!! There is absolutely no need!!” He posed agilely, but his forehead was sweating profusely. Was this the result of physical or mental injury? Everyone was stunned and Dietrich walked towards the workshop while

laughing in a loud voice. Edgar who composed himself followed in a hurry. "... Eh, Senpai seems to be fine. Let's start our training." After blankly seeing their Senpai off, Eru and the others finally started their training. Eru was obviously fine, but the twins could already move around freely. So they raised the difficulty and conducted something similar to a battle simulation. "Silhouette Gear has controls similar to Silhouette Knights, and it's in the form of full control. Control the movement of the crystal tissue, feel the flow of the mana. Control script. The two of you can move even faster!" "As if it's that simple!!" Training was done with Chid and Ady fighting two on one against Eru. Even so, the twins had never won before. They harboured the determination to get at least one win and launched the attack with perfect coordination. Chid lifted a great sword and charged at Eru, using the length of the sword to take the initiative. Eru's machine opted to close the distance instead. With the large difference in agility, it became Chid's turn to be on defense. "Oh, no! Eru is pressing in. Ady!" "Leave it to me! I will break off his attack!" Ady shouted, attacking Eru who was attacking Chid from the side. The machine lifted dual blades just like what its pilot preferred to use, it attacked continuously like a storm—but it failed to even touch Eru, who evaded all the strikes. But even though Ady didn't gain any advantage, the two on one situation remained the same. This time, it was Chid's turn to attack Eru's defensive gap when Eru was dodging. The great sword swung down with terrifying speed and was about to hit. "Nice teamwork... But!" With an explosive sound, Eru whose posture was very low suddenly accelerated. As he piloted the Silhouette Gear, he used his own power to accelerate with air compression magic. Eru jumped with a force threatening to heave up the ground, landing behind Ady who was preparing to change her position. She wanted to escape in a hurry, but was caught by Eru, who tossed her at Chid, who was swinging his sword down. "Hmm! Ugh!" The machines couldn't stop in time and collided. Looking at the two people he just beat, Eru nodded with satisfaction. "It's a bit small, but human shaped weapons are great. Power and drive are flowing out endlessly. How long are you two planning to lie there, let's continue!" "Sigh, don't you think Eru is even stricter than the time he was us teaching magic?" "It's no coincidence. If it has anything to do with Silhouette Gear, Eru will become vicious... can't be helped. Alright! Let's have another round." They cheered themselves up and challenged Eru's machine again. "It's fine if you want to train— but I'm the one who is doing the repairs, so don't break them..." The complaints of Batson, who was watching this scene dissipated into the wind. As the days got colder, the season changed from summer to autumn. The busy days of everyone passed by. Since Eru proposed the plans for strand crystal tissue and back weapons, several months had passed. With the continuous efforts of the pilot faculty's maintenance team, they finally completed a 'prototype machine'. "Ara, we finally reached this stage..." The Boss complained, unable to hide the fatigue in his voice. Some of the students had panda eyes, some were massaging their shoulders, and all of them gave off a heavy sense of fatigue. The few months before the completion of the prototype were a living hell. The one responsible for designs drew all sorts of plans, and the crafting leader completed every one of them. The machine took shape after several trials and errors, no wonder they were so exhausted. They might be students, but their skills were at the level of professional craftsmen. But this project was a grueling challenge. The harsh everyday conditions made them wonder 'why hasn't anyone died'. To reach this stage without losing their motivation, it was due to their boundless joy in developing new technologies. The evidence was their eyes that

were full of passion despite being worn out. “Okay, bring it out! Slowly. If you drop it, it won’t be settled with just a simple beating!!” Everyone carried the finished prototype to the trolley, sending it out of the workshop carefully. That thing was a bit strange. Its body was covered by a minimal layer known as ‘primary armour’ to protect its interior. Crystal tissue could even be seen from some of the parts. Only the chest and limbs were covered by outer skin, giving the impression of ‘incompleteness’. The prototype was quickly sent to the pilot faculty’s training ground which had the shape of a circular arena. After reaching the centre of the training ground, the chest of the prototype which was lying down was opened, allowing the test pilot Helvi to enter the pilot seat. Everyone from the maintenance team was seated in the audience seats of the arena to observe. In front of them were giant shields that protected them, a lesson they learned from the accident they had earlier. It was natural for them to be cautious. Even though they did several testing for the individual parts, this was the first time the entire assembled body would be tested. To be safe, they removed some of the larger auxiliary parts. “Okay, Helvi, are you ready!?!... For starters, stand up!” The Boss held a loudhailer and yelled. With this as the cue, the prototype started to stand up. The maintenance team members watched its movement closely. The creaking prototype slowly sat up; its movement stiffer than a normal machine, and was very slow. The arms braced the body, the legs bent. From afar, the legs that were exerting strength could be seen bulging. After spending quite some time, the prototype machine finally stood up. “It’s standing...!!” An emotional voice came from somewhere. When he thought about the efforts they put in to make it stand, the difficulties they overcame and the sacrifices, that voice was trembling. Completing this movement that was totally dependent on the power of the leg tissue, it was evident that the structure of the prototype machine could withstand the minimum output of the strand crystal tissue. “Not yet, be careful now... you over there! Don’t stick your body out! It’s dangerous!! Alright, steady... Helvi, try walking. Slowly, slowly.” The head of the prototype machine moved up and down, expressing understanding. After stopping for a moment, it decided to walk. Although it was in the centre of the training ground paved with stone slabs, its footsteps were extremely careful. It seemed to be walking on a hanging bridge that could break at any time, its speed slower than an ox driven cart. With the sound of heavy steps and churning muscles, it took quite a while to make it halfway around the training ground. “The stabilising components are still in place, it should be able to hold.” Because it had no outer skin, they couldn’t be careless. But at least it didn’t seem like it would break any time soon. The prototype machine moved to the front of the students of the maintenance team, and knelt on one knee with an even slower motion. It adopted the position of a Silhouette Knight on standby and stopped completely. Only then did the members of the maintenance team sigh in relief. After a moment of silence, there was an eruption of cheers. This was the moment the walking test succeeded—the moment where their past trial and errors bore fruit. The chest armour of the prototype machine opened and Helvi appeared. She was probably still nervous as she was breathing hard and was wiping her sweat. “Hey, Helvi, how did it feel to pilot that?” The Boss who had looked happy after the successful experiment asked. Helvi replied with a hint of bitterness: “It was literally a ‘wild horse’. There was too much energy; just walking took a lot of effort.” “It’s that bad?” “Yes, the sensation was completely different from the other machines I piloted. To be honest, everyone would need to be retrained.” “I see... To improve to the stage of walking was a great achievement, but the piloting system still needs to be worked on. That

would be left for later... Okay, it might not be too agile now, but since it had no problem walking, all that's left is to check the other parts." Helvi nodded and returned to the pilot seat. After the guys in the maintenance confirmed their safety and picked up their shields, they proceeded to the next phase. Unmodified Silhouette Knights carried large target boards into the training ground and placed them on the ground one by one. The Boss made his way to the stone paved training ground and kept issuing orders to the students around him. "Alright, bring in the Silhouette arms! For training use! Put the target board at the corner! And someone get the silver boy here! He is probably wandering around in his Silhouette Gear anyway; it's easy to spot him if you search around the vicinity!!" Around Laihiala Pilot Academy were some grocery shops and fast food restaurants. The students might not be financially rich, but with their large numbers, the market was rather big. Shops that catered to their daily needs congregated around the campus. Whenever school was out, stalls sprung out around the roads leading out of the campus. Most of them sold snacks. During this period, the students who were liberated from class were attracted like butterflies to honey, swarming to the stalls to eat the snacks. One of the stalls sold baked fruit pie. The stall owner was baking his pie as usual when he heard a female student place her order. "Owner, I want three fruit pies, with marmalade!" "Alright— please wait a moment, it will be done soon..." The voice of the owner, who turned his head to greet his customer, became softer gradually. The reason was simple, the one before his stall was a full armoured Knight instead of a student. It wasn't as tall as a Silhouette Knight, but it still towered over the tent. It twisted its body and peeked at the stall entrance, looking at the stunned owner with its tilted head. This awkward atmosphere went on for a while as two similar Knights came from behind to scold the one that arrived first. "Hey, Ady, why would anyone buy things while piloting that?" "Hmm? Ah, right! Sorry, sir, I must have frightened you." The voice of a young girl came from the heavily armoured Knight. The owner had not shaken off this ridiculous sight when the armour suddenly opened and a real female student came out of it, shocking him. "Wha, what is this thing!!" "Ah, owner, the pie is burnt!" The owner flipped the pie in a hurry upon hearing that, but several of them had already been burnt. The girl made an apologetic expression. "Ah— sorry, it's all because of me. We will buy that burnt one, then." "No, even though I was surprised, I was still the one who burned it. Please don't mind that." The owner put the fruit jam ordered by the customer into the pie and collected the money at the same time. The female student said her thanks, got back in the armour and left with the other Knights. "... The armour used by the Academy recently is incredible..." The owner held onto the coins with a shocked expression, seeing the three Knights off. "Hmm— It tastes great— Marmalade is the best—" "I prefer lychee jam." "I'm fine with anything that is sweet—" Ady, Eru and Chid held their pie in their hands as they moved the Silhouette Gear. They looked just like armoured Knights, but they were walking with a snack in hand— such a strange scene made the citizens and students give way to them in a panic. They have been using Silhouette Gear not just in training, but in their everyday lives as well, recently. As was seen earlier, it was a hassle to wear this in your daily lives, but they were not doing this out of convenience. As everyone knows, controlling Silhouette Gear requires the continuous usage of high level magic and drains a lot of mana. Magical abilities could only be strengthened with more training. If one wishes to increase their abilities efficiently, they would have to undergo training that was rather difficult. In other words, it was similar to them jogging while using physical boost magic, training their skills in their

daily lives. By the way, only Eru is piloting it because it is fun. As they were advancing with noisy steps, a pilot faculty student chased them from behind. He was sent by the Boss. "... Okay, the testing of the prototype machine? Please let us observe!" After hearing the message he conveyed, Eru accepted immediately. He even picked the messenger up, not wanting to waste even one second. The Silhouette Knight which was controlled by Eru using 'full control' had speed that far exceeded a normal man. Eru, who wanted to rush to the scene immediately, ignored the screams of the student being picked up as he charged toward the campus with incredible speed. The closer they got to the training ground, the more pilot faculty students there were. Unmodified Silhouette Knights were carrying maintenance parts and materials. The craftsmen and pilots were doing all sorts of work together. When Eru and company reached the training ground, they saw a Silhouette Knight without outer skin at the centre of the stone paved area. It was the 'prototype machine' that just finished the walking test. "It moved just as planned. It's great it didn't explode after taking a single step." "What you are worrying about is too simple... Are you really taking it off? If you wear this armour, it would be easier to escape if anything happened, right?" Eru put down the student who was on the verge of dying and walked to the Boss' side after jumping off from the Silhouette Gear. "Oh, you are here boy. Let's start, then." "I'm counting on you." The strand crystal tissue they conducted the test with, was made by the Boss and the craftsmen, completed after many trials and errors. In comparison, the back weapon experiment that would be done next was different— not just the basic theory, even the design was done by Eru. They got Eru here in order to confirm the next phase. "It looks fine... how complete is this thing?" "The turning and aiming was moving as designed before it was installed. What's next would probably be zeroing the sights and optimising the set up." "That... zeroing thing, what is that?" "Oh, eh... it's adjusting the aim to be as close to the target as possible... I think." "Oh, that's important. No matter what, all this would have to wait until the experiment is completed." Eru replied anxiously after alighting from the Silhouette Gear. The twins remained in their Silhouette Gears, which obstructed the work going on behind them unwittingly. "Okay! Let's start from installing the Silhouette arms!!" After receiving orders from the Boss, the pilot students holding the Silhouette arms approached the prototype machine. A structure never seen on a Silhouette Knight before was attached to the back of the prototype machine. On the place where the shoulder blades of a human should be, a rugged claw that looked similar to the mechanical arms used in manufacturing back on earth sprouted from there. Its function was similar to that too. This was the main structure of the back weapon — 'Auxiliary Arm'. The test movement started from the installation of the Silhouette arms, and one was used directly without modification. As the Auxiliary arm had a 'hand' that could operate Silhouette arms, it could be equipped with all sorts of Silhouette arms, making it one of the machine's selling point. The student machines standing behind the prototype machine handed the Silhouette arms over to the Auxiliary arms. Although the hand of the Auxiliary arms was simplified, it's movement was very smooth as it was made just for holding Silhouette arms and nothing else. Each Auxiliary arm grabbed a Silhouette arms, pointing it upwards. "Hmm, the movement of the Auxiliary arm seems fine." Although it required the assistance of another machine to change its Silhouette arms, the Auxiliary arms were functioning normally. Helvi, who was piloting the prototype felt a slight tremour from her back, and confirmed the image on her holo monitor. "Okay, Silhouette arms load out completed, testing deploying function now." Before taking the

role of a prototype pilot, she had been involved in the development of the back weapon. She had heard the briefing back then and knew the controls very well. “Deploying Silhouette arms, displaying reticle.” She pulled the lever besides the control stick, which sends instructions to the magius engine which activates the tissue in the Auxiliary arms. The auxiliary arms shook slightly and flexed, lifting the Silhouette arms up slowly. The Auxiliary arms turned from ninety degrees upright to horizontal, resting on the shoulders of the prototype machine, facing forward. Seeing that the movement was smoother than expected, the maintenance department students were in an uproar. They had seen the structure deploy several times before installation, but seeing it in action while installed was really moving. Inside the cockpit, there was a change on the holo monitor. It usually only displayed the scene outside, but it had a reticle used for aiming now. A combination of a cross and circle, it was a simple display. But taking the fact that there wasn’t anything there in the past, this could be considered a major improvement. “Aiming... I am going to fire.” Helvi aimed the reticle on the targets. Observing from outside, it was clear that the movement of the head was linked to the direction the Silhouette arms were pointing at. She nervously held her breath and cautiously squeezed the trigger. The Silhouette arms which received the command shot out magic bullets immediately. It was firing the standard flame bullets from the Silhouette arms. The magic bullets emitting red light flew out and hit the target as if they were sucked in that direction. The practice use armaments weren’t too powerful, that’s why the target kept its original shape, but the burn marks of the bullets were obvious. No one expected the experiment to be perfect, but they still hit the target in the end. “I thought we would need further adjustment, but we still managed to hit it.” “Isn’t that great? Ah, another hit.” The prototype fired more shots. There were some that missed, but the overall accuracy rate was 60%. After finishing, the prototype machine slowly retracted the Silhouette arms, which was the deployment movement in reverse. The Auxiliary arms folded, keeping the Silhouette arms vertically on its back. The testing objective was the deploy and retract functions, it would be enough if it could fire off shots, so the results were better than expected. “Oh... So, this is the back weapon... This thing might be more powerful than I imagined.” After witnessing the results, even the Boss was stroking his beard in praise. The students who were watching the prototype machine in action congratulated each other passionately. It was because the strand crystal tissue, back weapon and fire control system—the light at the end of developing all these new functions could be seen. When the things they were after bore fruit, that’s the happiest moment for technicians. “... Why is everyone so moved?” The twins who were neither pilots nor craftsmen couldn’t understand why everybody was so touched. They seemed out of place amongst the joyous crowd of students. Hearing the doubts of Ady coming from above his head, Eru replied with a wry smile: “Because this is the first step towards a brand new type of Silhouette Knights. Because it is a path paved by their own hands, that’s why it brought so much joy.” Ady nimbly crossed her Silhouette Gear’s arms, and lifted her head after agonising over it for a moment: “Hmm— I don’t really understand. But it’s great when you succeed!” “You are right, but, Ady...” Eru hugged his head, unsure of how to explain this to her clearly. As the maintenance students were immersed in the joy of their hard work bearing fruit, there was another group that stared at the prototype machine in another way. “Di, what do you think of its performance?” It was Edgar and Dietrich— Silhouette Knight pilots. They looked at the result with much thought. “Hmm, let me think... First, we will be at a disadvantage at long distances. We

have to use one arm to control the Silhouette arms, but the opponent could hold a shield. More importantly, it could even use a large shield with both hands to fight.” “That’s right, and it could use two Silhouette arms without taking risks. To make up for the gap when changing weapons, we would normally use one. It simply doubles the firepower. I don’t want to imagine getting into a firefight with it.” “Not bad, to be able to defeat your adversary more safely. Its functionality is great.” “You... It’s dependable in a fight against Demon beast, but we could be facing off against that too.” Edgar said and as Dietrich was about to refute, another voice interjected. “That’s right, how about I defeat you guys first?” The two turned their heads and saw the pilot of the prototype machine Helvi standing there. The experiment has ended as they were engrossed in their discussion. “I won’t say that that is impossible, but the machine is only half finished right?” “That might be so, but I confirmed all the main points during the test. It should be done really soon.” The layout had roughly been done, so it should be completed in no time. Helvi revealed a resolved smile and her eyes turned sharp. “If that is the case, don’t you think there are things that needs to be done? For example— letting the strongest Knight of the faculty who survived the battle with the Behemoth test his might against this new opponent?” Edgar’s eyes widened. He, Helvi and Dietrich were all survivors of the Behemoth Incident, but each of them had a different view on the matter. “Eh, you are right; there will be a need to conduct a mock battle anyway... so, you are talking about me? But Helvi, aren’t you a survivor of that battle, too?” “Just barely, it was a coincident that I survived. Because that ‘boy’ made it in time.” “Do you feel any regrets about this?” “Regret over what? I can’t thank him enough for that. I should say... I am curious about the machine made by that boy.” They watched the prototype machine that was being ferried at the same time. “I had taken part from the very start, so I know very well. If I pilot this ‘child’ with its new power, even I could beat you.” “...How scary.” Edgar didn’t look afraid at all, just a bit troubled. Helvi sighed softly. “That’s why, after this is done... Maybe I can fight that giant monster to the very last moment too.” “Helvi... Is that the reason why you took on the job of the test pilot?” “Nah, I just felt that it’s a good thing for Silhouette Knights to get stronger. We will have an easier time fighting Demon beasts after all.” Seeing Helvi smiling cheerfully as usual, Edgar felt that she was dodging the question. “Wash your neck and wait for me, Edgar. I will give you a good beating.” Edgar sighed softly, seeing Helvi who was waving her hand. Dietrich patted his shoulder. “I envy you, Edgar; the first one to fight the new model.” “Want to trade places with me? I’m serious.” “If you reject her challenge, she will hate you, right? And, of course, I will use your battle as a reference.” Even though Edgar was a little unwilling, he couldn’t hide his curiosity and his determination to win. The two contradictory feelings made Edgar show a complicated expression. After completing the structure of the strand crystal tissue that was the hardest to make, the rest of the work proceeded smoothly. The workers followed the plan and completed the movement test with armour on, and experiments like deploying the back weapons while moving and firing the weapon while moving. They gradually completed each phase. One month after the walking test, they finally moved from the prototype stage to the official naming stage. The prototype machine used for technical tests was dubbed ‘Tellestarle’— named after the machine it was modified from. Tellestarle showed itself slowly from the darkness of the workshop. Its appearance was not much different from the other student machines. As there would be further customisation in the future, it looked unrefined compared to the other machines. Only the two Silhouette arms on its back

emphasised its difference from the current models. Tellestarle walked towards the training ground— its movement smoother compared to the test back then, but it still felt a bit unnatural. Making its way through the training ground gate, it found another Silhouette Knight waiting there. The Knight ‘Earlecumber’ which was covered in white armour— It had a simpler appearance compared to Tellestarle, equipped with the standard sword and shield. But it was controlled by the pilot recognised as the strongest within the pilot faculty— Edgar. “Okay, Helvi seems to be ready. Let’s begin then, the mock battle between Tellestarle and Earlecumber!! Show us the result of the movement test!” The pilot faculty students who came in droves to watch the battle cheered after hearing the opening speech. The mock battle of the new model against the current strongest machine was a highly anticipated fight. Helvi stared at the image of Earlecumber displayed on the holo monitor, focusing herself in the pilot seat of Tellestarle. No matter how powerful the new model Tellestarle was, she couldn’t let her guard down. Edgar and Earlecumber fought that Behemoth directly after all. Even though he didn’t defeat the Behemoth, he was still a tough warrior who fought on the frontlines until the very last moment. On the other hand, she and her partner ‘Trandorches’ lost. Just like she said, it was just a coincidence that she didn’t die. Trandorches and Earlecumber were machines made by students, so their performance was about the same. That meant it was the result of the difference in the skills of the pilots. But, what about Tellestarle? It might be an untamed horse that was hard to control, but it had limitless potential. As the test pilot, Helvi had been with it all the way since its engine moaned for the first time, so she knew it very well. More importantly— She looked around the cockpit. The joystick she had gotten used to, the display metre that was revamped but was still familiar. The seat that fit her just felt familiar to her. Speaking of which, Tellestarle was built from the wreckage of the Behemoth incident and modified by students. This machine was constructed from the base of her half destroyed machine (Trandorches). Naturally, there were structural differences between the two machines and less than twenty percent of the original parts were left. Even so, this machine was still the partner she knew for so long. “We can fight together again... alright, we are going, Tellestarle!!” She stepped on the pedal hard and shouted the name of her partner that was bestowed with new life. The machine responded energetically, leading her back to the battlefield.

Knights & Magic - Volume 2 - Chapter 12

On the training ground of the Laihiala Pilot Academy, two giants faced each other with swords in hand. The iron armour reflected a dull gleam and the sound from the friction of the crystal tissue reverberated in the entire field. What follows next would be a mock duel, which is part of training and testing. But for the two pilots riding in the strongest weapon of humanity, this was definitely a battle. The atmosphere wasn't relaxing at all, as the pilots are burning with fighting spirit in the gradually rising tension. "Okay, are you ready? We will be having a duel next!! Both of you have to adhere to the rules of a mock duel. Bow! Ready!... Begin!!" With the cue of the referee's command, the two iron giants charged out with a roar. Basically, a battle between Silhouette Knights starts with firing off Silhouette arms. When they close the gap, they would switch to melee weapons. Because the Silhouette arms were dependent on the emblem graft engraved on them, they were structurally weak and would be destroyed easily in melee combat, depriving the pilot of the means to attack. Edgar had seen Tellestarle's back weapon in action. Using two Silhouette arms at the same time and attacking from a distance was a big threat. That was why Edgar wanted to do away with the long distance battle and moved into a melee battle immediately. But contrary to his expectation, Tellestarle moved forward immediately after the battle started, gradually closing the distance. What is she thinking? Doesn't she want to use the advantage of a ranged attack? But that suits me just fine! Earlecumber took a strong step forward, wanting to give it a headstart on the slash. But as he was swinging his sword, Edgar realised he misjudged the functionality of the back weapon. As the two machines were about to collide, Tellestarle suddenly deployed the Silhouette arms onto its shoulders. Helvi, who was looking at the reticle displaying before her in the cockpit smiled as her plan worked. "I will use this in place of a greeting. The ability to shoot magic rounds even at close distance—the real value of the back weapon!" The dual Silhouette arms on Tellestarle's back fired off simultaneously. Even the tough Earlecumber couldn't evade the attack at such a close distance. Its shield blocked one of the shots; the other hit the right shoulder which wasn't covered by the shield. The training shot wasn't strong enough to blow the right arm off, but Earlecumber still lost its balance and its advantage in pressing the attack. "That's not all!" Tellestarle swung its blade as it retracted its Silhouette arms. Using the momentum, it attacked the unbalanced adversary. The movements were rough, but it was more terrifying than a half assed attack. Edgar didn't resist the falling motion. He spun to the right and pushed out the shield on its left arm to block Tellestarle's blow. Earlecumber managed to defend the attack, but was almost sent flying as it staggered backwards. Earlecumber was in such an awkward position because it was unbalanced, and also because of the power behind Tellestarle's strike. "...!! What terrifying strength, so this is the power of the strand crystal tissue!?" Edgar groaned and leaped backwards to pull away. The back weapon could attack from unexpected angles, and the strand crystal tissue displayed overwhelming strength. Edgar

repositioned himself as he threw away all the known tactics of dueling. “Eh, really, I am getting used to abandoning common sense, how unpleasant!” The holo monitor showed that Tellestarle had started to advance, coming after Earlecumber. It had given up the idea of a surprise attack, deploying its Silhouette arms onto its shoulders as it forged ahead.

“But I won’t back down so easily!!” Simple back and forth movement will just make Earlecumber the target of magic shots. Earlecumber started moving sideways, escaping out of Tellestarle’s attack range. A heated battle started from the very beginning, which pumped up the audience in the training ground. Cheers erupted every time the iron giants crossed swords. Unlike the audience immersed in the heat of the battle, the maintenance students analysed the battle in low voices. “As expected of Edgar, most pilots would have fallen from the first attack.” “Helvi-senpai is piloting really smoothly.” “Being the test pilot wasn’t just for show.” The ones conversing were Eru and the Boss. For these two, Tellestarle moving in a situation close to actual battle was as valuable as gold. They observed carefully, analysing their every move. The two machines clashed right in their field of vision. They thought the machines would struggle for quite a while with swords, but Tellestarle had an advantage in power, pushing Earlecumber’s sword back; but Earlecumber wasn’t a pushover either, pulling away from Tellestarle as if he had expected it, not letting Tellestarle gain the upper hand. “Helvi seems to be relying heavily on the ‘power’ advantage.” “The difference in power output is significant after all. I think this is the best way to gain the upper hand. To be honest, the controls have not been optimised yet, so she will lose if she relies on delicate controls to fight.” The Boss accepted Eru’s commentary. Tellestarle had overwhelming energy and excellent explosive power. But as the control system had not been calibrated perfectly, it couldn’t perform delicate movements, and could only attack with crude steps. Edgar could see this and didn’t take the hit head on. Even so, Tellestarle, who could attack with the sword and back weapon simultaneously had the upper hand. “How dangerous! I have to stop the Silhouette arms, it’s too powerful!!” Edgar, who was trapped, analysed the situation calmly. His opponent, Helvi, had grasped the feature of Tellestarle, and used the most effective ways to attack, to cover its weakness. Even though Edgar had noticed that the movement of Tellestarle wasn’t polished, but he couldn’t take advantage of it. If this was a fight between normal Silhouette Knights, Edgar would be about to lure the opponent to attack and counter. But it’s another matter when battling Tellestarle. The most crucial factor was the back weapon resulting in the difference in means of attack. The opponent could attack and restrain Edgar’s movement with unexpected timed attacks. He had less ways to attack, and will lose in terms of strength in a wrestle. It had nothing to do with skill; that’s how big the difference in machine performance was. The students watching knew that Earlecumber didn’t mess up or was giving a handicap. Hence, even though its movement was still crude, the new model that was overwhelming the strongest man in the faculty brought the excitement of the crowd to the boiling point. Earlecumber was gradually forced into a corner. If he doesn’t take a gamble and take out the back weapon, Edgar will definitely lose. “I don’t like gambling... but it would be pointless if I lose without trying anything.” Seeing Earlecumber in her holo monitor stopping, Helvi mumbled: “... He is getting impatient. Edgar wants to bet everything on the next attack.” Helvi knew her skills were not at his level, so she had to fight by relying on the performance of the machine. It was easy for Helvi to guess Edgar’s objective. “He can’t make up for the power output of the strand crystal tissue... he is probably aiming for the back weapon.” If Edgar takes the

back weapon out, no matter how vast the gap in the power output was, he had a chance to aim for the weak point with precision and turn the situation around with his skills. Because both pilots knew this, the main objective of the upcoming scrimmage was decided. The two machines pointed their swords at each other and stopped moving. The silence after the heated exchange was like a tightened string, and the tension grew with it. Before they realised, the audience had turned quiet, waiting for the end of the battle with bated breath. The sharp sound of intake of air was suddenly heard, it was Earlecumber revving the ether reactor at full power. That sound was akin to the battle cry of the Silhouette Knights, and the tensed situation changed— Earlecumber charged. Out of all his choices, Edgar chose a direct assault. The iron Knight dashed with heavy steps which almost shattered the stone paved ground. “Going head on in such a situation, that’s just like you! Good, I will do my best too!!”

No matter how wide the power difference was, if its momentum doesn’t match her opponent, Tellestarle won’t be able to take the hit. That’s why Helvi ordered Tellestarle to advance too. The scene of both machines clashing with a charge was reminiscence of the opening of the battle. Tellestarle used the attack which was to her advantage, the two Silhouette arms on her shoulders fired at Earlecumber. Earlecumber used its shield to defend while swinging its sword to deflect the shot. The sword mastery capable of deflecting magic shots was commendable, but swinging his sword right before clashing with the enemy meant giving up the chance to attack. Even the audience could tell. Tellestarle closed in on Earlecumber at this moment and was about to give a mighty blow. Everyone, including Helvi, thought that this ending was a letdown when Edgar, who took the initiative to attack, is being cut down like that. Of course, Edgar didn’t swing his sword because of carelessness. He had decided to use the sword for defense right from the start. Gripping the crucial shield, it moved its fist near its shoulder to secure its hold. Earlecumber lowered its posture and threw the left side of its body forward. “... What!? Shield bash!! He wants to clash head on!?” Helvi sensed Earlecumber’s intention at the last moment and kept her sword. She would be at a disadvantage if she used her sword against Earlecumber’s shield. Edgar’s plan was simple, even if his means of attack and pure power output loses to his adversary; Earlecumber still had an advantage over his opponent, which is ‘weight’. He used speed to make up for the difference in power and charged at Tellestarle like a bullet. Piloting skills aside, Tellestarle had the advantage in terms of strength— Helvi had absolute confidence in this and decided to take the attack head on. When she discovered Edgar’s motives, it was too late for Tellestarle to dodge. She had already started to accelerate, and had to take the same actions. Tellestarle raised its shield and the two Silhouette Knights collided shortly after. At that moment, the loud bang of the collision reverberated through the entire training ground. The shields taking the full brunt of the impact deformed, splitting the two machines to the side on offense and defence. Helvi, who hesitated because of the unexpected attack and Edgar, who was aiming to clash from the very beginning— His objective was to enter the melee range, that’s why he threw himself into this attack. Earlecumber didn’t forego the chance it gained after its heavy sacrifice, lifting its right arm which was still mobile, and stabbing into the Silhouette arms on Tellestarle’s shoulders. “You are good!! But I won’t fall for that again!!” Earlecumber’s left arm was heavily damaged and couldn’t move freely. But surprisingly, Tellestarle’s left arm was still working after that collision. The strand crystal tissue was damaged, but still showed its strength, pushing Earlecumber easily. “What!?”

Not just the power, even the toughness was enhanced!? But I can't miss this opportunity..." "Just a bit more!! Tellestarle!!" Earlecumber's quick attack went over its opponent's shoulder, destroying the Silhouette arms. But that's the limit of his all out counterattack. Tellestarle's seemingly endless strength pressed back at Earlecumber, pushing Earlecumber, who was in an unstable position due to the previous attack staggering backwards. "Ugh! Did I push it too much?!" "I got this! Edgar-!!" Tellestarle charged at Earlecumber mightily. The off balanced Earlecumber couldn't evade the attack, its wounded left hand was unable to lift its shield. Tellestarle raised its sword high, and was about to hack at the helpless Earlecumber—



But the sword didn't fall, and Tellestarle knelt onto the ground. It was hard to describe the atmosphere in the training ground, maybe 'dumbfounded' and 'stunned' would be appropriate. Why did Tellestarle, which was about to deliver the final blow kneel down? Just by looking at the stunned reaction of Earlecumber, it was easy to tell this wasn't the result of Earlecumber's timely counterattack. No one expected this result just as the match was about to be decided at the very climax. No one knew how to react to this finale, and the entire training ground was shrouded in silence. "...Ah! The mana had been exhausted!" The shout of Eru, who figured it out echoed through the silent training ground. "Well then, time for the maintenance department's first after action review." Eru announced the start of the meeting with a serious expression. Inside the workshop, Eru, the Boss and their merry friends were all gathered here, everyone had an awkward expression. Even Eru who always does as he pleased looked distracted—he hesitated a moment and peeked at the reason of the awkwardness. What he saw was Helvi, who was squatting gloomily in a corner of the workshop. The kanji 'awkward' could almost be seen coming out of her body. It wasn't her fault, but ending it so abruptly after such a stellar performance, she would rather be defeated in battle. It's no wonder she was sulking. It was within their expectations for the prototype to have flaws, but it picked an awkward time to act up— That's how one would frankly describe the feelings of the audience. No, the problem only surfaced because of their fierce fight before the conclusion of the battle. But these facts couldn't console Helvi. "Ed, Edgar-senpai, could you please cheer Helvi-senpai up..." "Hey, why me!? Ugh, ahh, I will do my best..." Eru, who couldn't stand it any longer forcefully pushed Edgar to Helvi's side. After seeing him go with a selfless expression, Eru turned his head back refreshingly. "Phew, that should do. Let's think about tackling the new problem that surfaced." "Don't die, Edgar... Well, the problem is obvious. The greater the output, the bigger the consumption rate, it's very logical." Everyone looked at Tellestarle which was placed on the maintenance platform and thought hard. Using strand crystal tissue to increase the power output led to a higher mana usage rate, depleting the mana reserves at a faster pace. With the Silhouette arms being easier to use, the mana consumption rate was higher than expected. On the other hand, the amount of crystal tissue didn't rise by much after implementing the strand crystal tissue method, so the mana reserves only increased slightly. This resulted in the flaw of shorter operational time for Tellestarle. The timing of this problem was bad, but it made sense when you think about it. "Considering all these factors, the operational time is about half of a normal machine... This is very bad, right?" "The worst. It could be considered a fatal flaw..." The point of emphasis for this modification was the increase in power output, installing Silhouette arms and aiming functions and such. Anyway, they were all things that consume mana, so the imbalance of the modification rose to the surface. After years of tweaking, the Silhouette Knights were designed to store as much mana as possible, but it also meant the design couldn't be changed easily. That might be so, but sitting here sighing wouldn't help either. In order to not let Helvi's honourable sacrifice go to waste, they had to think of something to overcome that flaw. "The main point is that the mana supply couldn't keep up with the consumption rate... But it's difficult to modify the source—the ether reactor. Or rather, it's impossible." Even Eru couldn't do anything

about the mysterious reactor. His words made the students around him relax secretly. If Eru could customise that too, they would have all fallen over in shock. “What about lowering the output? But, even so, it wouldn’t change the fact that the structure burns a lot of mana... and lowering the output would be putting the horse before the cart.” “Another way would be increasing the mana storage capacity... How is the capacity increased?” “Simply put, by increasing the amount of crystal tissue.” “Can’t we do that, then?” “If we increase the crystal tissue, the consumption rate would increase too.” There would be no end to this. “The strand crystal tissue has an intangible flaw. The amount of tissue didn’t increase much, that’s why the power output and capacity is unbalanced.” This serious issue gave everyone a headache; this wasn’t something that could be resolved easily. But hope came from an unexpected source. “How about using your idea?” As everyone was silent in thought—Ady who didn’t say anything spoke up. Hearing Ady, who was usually quiet during conference voice her opinion, Eru asked: “My idea?” “That’s right, ‘it’s fine even if the appearance is not human’! We can increase the tissues, but we don’t need to stick with the human form, right?” “It’s fine... even if it’s not human... I get it. Correct, you are correct.” For her, this was just repeating something Eru said. But the one who said it was surprised with his eyes widening, and he slowly squinted his eyes. “Ugh, you are correct, but for Ady to enlighten me... I can’t believe it.” “How mean!! Why—!?” The Boss ignored the raging Ady and Eru, who was being chased. Ady’s comment reminded the Boss too, and they came to the same conclusion. Being fine even if it’s not in the shape of a human, doesn’t mean you had to use a shape that was inhuman. “That’s it! Increasing the crystal tissue doesn’t mean it has to move. By connecting the silver nerves to it, and pushing it into excess space, it would be fine if we could increase the ‘mass’ of the crystal tissue!” “Ke! I said, I am sorry! Kah!... Sorry, I apologise... Alright?... Boss, we should maximise the space usage, so we shouldn’t use fibre form but sheets... I think it would be best to employ the form of a sheet.” Hearing Eru’s proposal, the Boss lifted his head. “Alright, it’s decided. Next would be negotiating with the alchemist faculty and asking for their help. I will go ahead and greet them, leave it to me!” After finding a solution to the critical issue, the air around the maintenance department relaxed. Eru was cracking his head, thinking of ways to soothe the piqued Ady. The iron giant made a squeaking sound as it stood up. It was ten metres tall, more than five times the height of the humans in the vicinity. The rough armour maintained its original metallic shine, reflecting a dull glow from the sunlight. The sound of its armour clanking grew louder as it moved. The giant moved its body to check its condition, and nodded at the person at its feet. When it had confirmed all the people in the vicinity had left, it started to move according to the instruction of the people around it. The crystal tissue covering the arms of the giant started to contract from the effects of mana. Its body tensed and lifted both arms with emphasis and shot its elbows to the side. It stretches its arms, shoulders and chest muscles, with both feet planted firmly on the ground — ‘front double bicep pose’. Next, it took a light step forward, and put down its arms. Its fists meeting before its abdomen. Leaning slightly forward, it used all its might to pump its arm and chest muscle— the position that brings out the best of power and beauty, ‘the most muscular pose’. The iron giant kept on changing its pose. “... What the hell is this... No, what experiment is this?” “Hmmm? According to the explanation, it seems to be testing for crystal tissue parts that aren’t used much.” “Who? Who set such an agenda?” Looking at the experiment devised by a certain silvered hair youth and the prototype that was concentrating on doing all sort of poses,

Edgar complained with a dumb look. Helvi was the one who answered him. “Well, its fine if it is a proper experiment... Eh, is it fine? It’s fine, right?...” “Is that so? Forget about that. Is the testing for unit two going well?” “Yes. The pilot just changed shifts, but it is progressing smoothly.” Before Edgar was another Tellestarle named as unit two, which was doing another set of tests. Other than these two machines with exposed tissues, other Tellestarle could be seen doing all sorts of movement tests. The experiment ended with the great flaw of reduced operational time a few days ago, but new developments had started because of that mock battle. The flaw aside, because its discovery was too dramatic, it made everyone wonder if there were other critical flaws. That’s why experiments with repeated and large movements were set to filter out any more problems. Everyone agreed to the additional testing, but it couldn’t be done with just one Tellestarle, so they created more machines of similar models to deal with that. To do this, the maintenance team worked nonstop after the mock battle, and some were worried about the students being overworked to death. In the end, they created five Tellestarle. They weren’t piloted by a handful of Knight Runners, but by a team working in shifts to complete the list of experiments. Thanks to this, no major defects were discovered. They also made improvements during this time period, steadily improving the level to its perfection. Edgar and Helvi just happened to be both on break, and were chatting about how to adjust to the controls. Recently, they had been talking about the new models every now and then. “... We need to discuss this part with Ernesti, too. Hmm? That’s right; I haven’t seen him around lately.” Stopping his sentence halfway, Edgar remembered because of the name he brought up. They didn’t see Eru recently, which made Helvi troubled. “That boy should be watching the experiments here; you can’t even drag him away. What happened?” “... Did he run into some troubles...?” Edgar’s expression stiffened slightly and he looked up at the clear sky— “I’m not usually this free.” “Really? So, what’s so special about today?”

Ady was hugging Eru and poked her head out from behind. Eru dodged her gaze with wandering eyes. Before them were the blue Silhouette armour and many other spare parts. When Edgar brought up Eru in campus, Eru and his friends were gathered at the Tymomen Workshop. The development of Tellestarle was proceeding well with the efforts of the high schoolers. With nothing major requiring his assistance, Eru, who was ‘bored’ immersed himself in the development of ‘equipment for Silhouette gear’. “That’s right, we are busy; there are tons of things we need to test.” “You are that free, but you only play with Batson! You only train with Chid as an opponent and you don’t go out much, how boring.” This equipment was designed by Eru and made by Batson. The miniature armour was different from the Silhouette Knights. The challenge of making equipment for Silhouette gear spurred their desire for research. The passion of these two even made Ady, who was given the cold shoulder kick up a fuss. With Eru and Ady, who were playing casually at one side, Batson deftly opened the armour of the Silhouette gear to install the internal parts while Chid watched. “I’m fine with it though. But you had made so many. What is that?” “This is called ‘Wire Anchor’, ask Eru for a detailed explanation... As for its uses, see for yourself.” Although they made about ten ‘first generation’ Silhouette gears, it wasn’t utilised because of the difficulty in the controls. It had become Eru and the other’s toy— correction, training tool. Only Edgar or Dietrich would use them for training. With Eru’s permission, they would visit every now and then. “Oh yeah, Edgar-senpai was complaining a few days ago, saying it was harder to pilot after changing the crystal tissue into the strand type.” Of course, the strand crystal tissue had moved on to practical

applications thanks to Tellestarle. It had greater strength, but the controls were also more difficult, even Edgar had to give up on that. “Anyway, it’s too pitiful to keep calling them ‘Silhouette gear’, it’s about time for an official name... right, how about Lucy Kimiko Akie Airi Shiori Rinne Yoshiho Ayano Tomika Chitose Sanae Mikiko Ichika!?” “Too long! Pick something shorter.” “Then, use the short version ‘Motor Beat’.” “Hey, the short version has nothing to do with the name you came up with earlier!” “Motor beat... nice to meet you.” After greeting his own Motor beat, Chid’s face stiffened. Oh no, he might have been infected by Eru. He facepalmed himself and shook his head. “Well, since the name has been decided, time to show off the new equipment. Stop sulking Ady and help, alright?” Eru finally soothed Ady and got on the blue Motor beat made to his size. He walked towards the yard of the workshop and pointed the arm of Motor beat at the wall that was higher than the building, instead of the target boards. “Watch carefully... Wire anchor, fire!” The sound of a shot followed the cheerful shout, an arrow shaped projectile flew out from the wrist—wires were attached to the end of the arrow, which kept coming out from the wrist. The arrow defied gravity and went at full speed towards the top of the workshop, and went over the roof at a sharp corner. The internal mechanism activated, turning the arrow into the shape of an anchor. Eru pulled on the wire to check if the anchor was secure. “It’s stable, next would be... take off!” The gears inside Motor beat’s arm made churning noises. Motor beat was pulled by the wire that was secured and he started running towards the wall and leaped. After ‘landing’ on the wall, it took several steps and ran up to the roof. After twisting in the air, the motor beat used air suspension magic to cushion its landing, stopping on the roof top gently. Eru commanded the Motor beat to stand up slowly, focusing his script and mana on the arrow that was still embedded in the roof. The wire attached to the anchor contained silver nerves, and the script was sent to the crystal tissue installed in the anchor. The deployed anchor changed its shape, returning into its arrow form and was stored in its arm. The arrow head was propelled by the crystal tissue built into it, using aero thrust intermittently to move. By controlling the direction of the propulsion, it could even change its flight path to a certain degree. “Amazing, gear.... no, Motor beat got up onto the roof in no time.” Ady and the others, who saw the entire process lifted their heads and watched. Even with their physical boost spell, climbing to the top of buildings while wearing armour was a tedious task. And, Eru managed to do that while wearing Motor beat which was even bigger. It was something that amazed them. “Oh—it went well this time, Eru.” “I had fallen so many times before! Let’s try the next one!” “Ah, so it will fail sometimes... Eh, so you want to bring ‘that’ here?” Eru jumped off the roof. Even Motor beat would be in trouble if it fell from such a height. It decelerated using air compression on the way down, and used air suspension to absorb the impact, kicking up a cloud of dust. Once it landed, Chid and Ady started dragging something out of the workshop. They were holding different items. Chid was holding a giant bow, built mainly from wood and reinforced with steel. Behind the bow was a mechanism with gears. Chid looked at the thing he brought out and said: “Eh, this crossbow is too big... is this a siege weapon?” “You are right. To be precise, it is the mini version of a ballista.” As Eru had described, that bow was large even in the hands of the Motor beat. It would be too heavy to operate without the Motor beat. “Why would you want something this big... Ah—I see. You want to use the Motor beat to operate the ballista.” “Not only that... Ady? Did you bring the ‘magazine’? Please put it in.” Inside the cart pushed over by Ady were several box-like items known as magazines. It was as

thick enough for a man's torso, and would protrude out even when held by a Motor beat. "Simply put, this uses strand crystal tissue on the bow string and loading mechanism, a weapon known as 'Mobile Ballista'. By controlling the crystal tissue, you can shoot out the bolts freely." "I see. What about this magazine?" "There are bolts in there and they would move whenever the bowstring was retracted, reloading after shooting out one bolt. As for the next part, it would be quicker to just show you." Chid followed Eru's instructions; inserting the magazine into the front and centre part of the ballista. The catch clicked, securing the magazine in place. After confirming that the magazine has been secured, Ady started transmitting script and mana to the ballista. The strand crystal tissue stretched to the limit, making the unique sound of crystal tissue being pulled. The gear connected to the pulling motion loaded a bolt onto the groove of the ballista. The next control was special: Since the crystal tissue is the bowstring, there wasn't any mechanism like a trigger. Chid could control the crystal tissue directly in order to fire the bolts. Chid commanded the crystal tissue that had been stretched to the limit to retract. The bolt flew out with a mighty sound. As Chid was aiming from a close distance, the arrow pierced the wooden target dead on. This bolt was shorter and thicker when compared to its bow. It might be relatively short, but since it was fired from a (mini) ballista, it was closer to a spear with fletching rather than an arrow. Utilising the power of the strand crystal tissue to its limit, while the bolts fired from the ballista couldn't match mainstream weapons, they were powerful enough. The result was the bolt piercing the wooden target and pulverising part of it. "...Eh, I don't think we should fire this inside the city." "It's fine; there is a really thick earth wall behind the range. Unless you use Overt magic and focus at one point, you won't be able to break through it." Eru and Batson ignored Chid, who froze in place after firing it and chatted idly. Ady, who was hugging a magazine was looking at the bolt that demolished part of the target excitedly. "Oh right, by using the crystal tissue, you can fire repeatedly. Depending on proficiency, you can fire a shot every five seconds. A magazine has ten bolts, so it could be depleted in a minute." "Phew! Is that so... let me try." Chid raised the ballista timidly. Breathing out to calm his mind, he started firing continuously. The rhythm of the churning and the arrows flying through the air continued for a moment, the bolts hit the target one after another. The target fell apart after the fifth shot, so he shot the remaining bolts onto the wall. "A portable siege weapon that can be fired repeatedly, how frightening—" "But, it is portable after all, though it is heavy and hard to control. It's put together with spare parts and has low accuracy, so it needs numbers to cover for its lack of precision." "What do you want to do with this, Eru?" "... Don't you think challenging the limits and creating new things is something amazing?" "You didn't think about how to utilise this at all..." Chid's questions made Eru avert his gaze and smile nonchalantly. And so, the Silhouette gear slowly turned into a terrifying weapon without anyone realising it. The movement tests of the prototype were about to finish when the alchemist faculty sent word that the ordered goods had been completed. Because the crystal tissue was in the form of a sheet, it was dubbed 'sheet crystal tissue'. The new material was sent to the workshop one by one. Past research on crystal tissue focused on how to effectively increase output from the contraction of the tissue, mana storage was only seen as a secondary function. But with the development of the sheet crystal tissue as a catalyst, the alchemist had also started researching crystal tissue that are used primarily to store mana. Doing the research from a different angle renewed their motivation; they would definitely come up with a crystal tissue that has large mana

capacity sooner or later. As for the prototypes that went through a long series of test, the results showed that there were no major defects except for the shortened operation period. The sheet crystal tissue became the last piece in the puzzle to make up for its flaw. In order to finish the project, the craftsmen started the modification project to increase the mana capacity of the Silhouette Knight. “Eh, we are full of drive, but this isn’t working.” Their original plan was to install the sheet crystal tissue into the space inside the armour. But, when they started researching it, they found the space to be smaller than expected. To avoid interfering with the crystal tissue used for movement, they couldn’t stuff the tissue into any space haphazardly. And, so, they removed all the armour, covered the machine with a layer of sheet crystal tissue, and replaced the armour, using multiple layers. This was done in order to not affect the tissues responsible for movement. Increasing the mass of the tissue meant increasing the mana storage. By extending the operation time, it would be a success. But the results weren’t as optimistic. The guys moaned at the sight of Tellestarle. “How fat, how lame...!!” Even if they put their sense of aesthetics aside, the multiple layer method posed many problems. It drastically increased the machine weight and lowered mobility, even the power of the strand crystal tissue couldn’t compensate for that. The thick armour interfered with movement, and the melee combat ability. The crystal tissue layer could increase defence as a secondary armour, but with the disadvantages outweighing its benefits, they rejected this method. “Too heavy! Let’s try to ‘slim’ him down.” The next thing they thought of was to limit the parts with multiple layers. Considering its detrimental effect on melee combat, only the armour that didn’t affect the movements of the joints were installed with multiple layers. This method won’t increase the weight by much, but the crucial mana reserves won’t improve much either. But the method of adding multiple layers was preserved, and was named ‘Capacity frame’. “This is the limit of adding crystal tissue into the inside...” “If we increase it anymore, it would affect the armour.” The only solution left was to install the sheet crystal tissue on the outside. In order to avoid the problem with weight, they didn’t even install armour, covering it with cloth and wires, which was just barely better than exposing it. After researching where humans could store extra weight, they decided on the back or the waist, with the back being the best fit. They thought so, too, but it created another problem. “Really, what a ‘stubborn machine’! Be more considerate!” They removed the back weapon to install the crystal tissue, but the result of a heavy mass on the back was shifting the centre of gravity backwards, affecting melee fighting ability and control. Silhouette Knights were built to fight; it would be bad if the pilots couldn’t control it properly. And, removing the back weapon would invalidate the existence of the new model. They had no choice but to explore other methods. “What the hell do we have to do?!” “Let’s do all we can and test everything out.” In the end, they decided to use the capacity frame and distributed the sheet crystal tissue on the outside. They added tissue that won’t affect the balance onto the back, and installed pockets of crystal tissue on the waist, too. They had to make adjustments to the equipment on the waist and were able to increase the mana capacity. They improved on its weak points, but there were still some problems with the operation period that remained. In the end, the Silhouette craftsmen gave up on solving all the problems at this current stage. With their technology, they needed heavy crystal tissues in order to ensure a sufficient supply of mana. Everyone agreed that they should wait for the alchemist to develop a new type of crystal tissue with large mana capacity, solving the problem at its roots. The modified Tellestarles were lined up in the workshop in standby

mode. There were five of them with capacity frames, and had a more solid appearance compared to its earlier days. On its back and waist were pockets of sheet crystal tissue. It didn't look like a mechanical customisation, giving it a feeling of being more human. "That's it. It's not perfect, but that's the best we can manage! It's complete!" The feeling of it being a rushed job couldn't be waved off, but the craftsmen decided to change their thinking. The modification of the Tellestarle series was enough to cover its critical flaw, the highest level of completion they could hope for at the current stage. It wasn't perfect, but these five machines still had the potential of being more powerful than the old Silhouette Knights, leading the way to a new generation of Silhouette Knights. Seeing them lined up like this, the maintenance department and the pilots finally saw the completion of an entire phase. Everyone had different reaction when they saw the Tellestarle series; some were immersed in a sense of accomplishment, some were glad to be free from work, and some were already thinking about ways to improve the models. But all of them had the same expression of making it through a tough challenge, basking in the pride and glory. The Boss had the same expression and turned to look at everyone, showing his teeth in a brilliant smile. "Good work, everyone! You have worked too hard!! We still have many problems to tackle, but let's celebrate the completion of these fellows! After finishing such a big project, I don't need to tell you what we need to do next, right!?" Everyone lifted their hands and acknowledged the Boss loudly. They all came to a consensus, the entire pilot faculty held an overnight celebration party. That scene could only be described this way: When the sky was dim and the surroundings enveloped in darkness, the celebration party morphed into the Demon realm. By the way, Fremmevira law dictates that only adults (fifteen years old) could drink alcohol. Eru and his friends didn't take part, and the party was exclusive to the entire pilot faculty. In the raving atmosphere with several people literally 'flying' into the air, one figure left silently. He blended into the noisy atmosphere and kept a low profile, leaving the celebration party which was a Demon realm in hasty steps and returned to his room in the dormitory. The sky was dark; a light was lit in a room in the silent dormitory. After returning to the room, he shook his giddy head, drinking water to wash away the alcohol. His roommate was probably still drinking in the workshop. He relaxed and took out a stack of paper from the drawer of his table. There was an organised report on it, stating technology related to Silhouette Knights— including the prototype machine and strand crystal tissue. He added details of the sheet crystal tissue and capacitive frame onto it. It wasn't exhaustive, but it was enough for others to understand the gist of the prototype. As he felt his dizziness fade away, he felt satisfied with the content he wrote, and placed it back into the drawer.

Knights & Magic - Volume 2 - Chapter 13

Noticing that the shadow blocking the sun was beside his hand, Eru raised his head and looked at the sky outside his window. The clouds turning from white to grey slowly eroded the clear blue sky. He looked at the notebook before him, relaxing his stiff shoulders and overworked brain. His gaze turned to the skyline, watching the heavy grey clouds. The thin clouds would probably turn black soon. As Eru was thinking mindlessly about that— “Ernesti, don’t look around during class.” The voice pulled Eru, who was losing his focus back. Eru apologised obediently to the teacher who had a stiff expression and looked back at the blackboard. The teacher continued his lesson, and with the sound of chalk writing on the blackboard, the voice explaining the history of Fremmevira could be heard. His classmates glanced at him curiously, before turning their attention back to the content written on the blackboard. That was close; I shouldn’t relax no matter how tired I am. Let’s review my work... Eru looked at the notebook in his hand once again. It was a pity but as Eru’s classmates were listening to the lecture seriously, he was writing things that were unrelated to the lesson into his notebook. Specifically speaking, it had the sketches of strange Silhouette Knights, with legends marked at the side. Tellestarle is completed, which means the foundation has been laid. With this foundation, I have to prepare a surprise that will amaze the King... I have to start with the designs. Thinking about matters that were obviously unrelated to class, looking at the blackboard from time to time while writing down notes, Eru appeared no different than usual. A normal twelve year old wouldn’t have covered that up so perfectly. This was the result of experience— In a negative manner. No one suspected his attitude towards lessons, and the class carried on smoothly. No, there were some who had noticed. Hmm— the wire anchor seems fun. I will ask them to install it for me next time. He did say the controls were a hassle, but there must be a way. I will bring Eru to walk around and eat snacks, I’ve decided! All work and no play will make Eru a dull boy! The two of them got the attitude one should have in class wrong, but it wasn’t a big issue. By the way, although they are like this during lessons, they all had good grades for lessons outside of magic and physical training. The shadows from the clouds gradually became darker. The Boss who was taking a break under the shelter of the workshop looked at the sky and let out an irritated moan. “Sigh—it’s gonna rain.” “Shouldn’t we be glad that it didn’t rain during the testing for Tellestarle?” Edgar who was sitting beside the table answered absentmindedly. Dietrich who was sitting at the same table looked at his hand seriously, while Helvi watched the two of them with a smile. “It’s troublesome when it rains. There will be some endurance tests coming up soon. Ah, a pair, I’m going to win soon.” As she spoke, Helvi placed the card she picked and a card in her hand onto the table. There was a reason why they were playing cards. The students from the pilot faculty had hung on until the celebration party, but after that, most of the craftsmen collapsed from exhaustion and most of them took leave. The newly finished machines could not be activated without the maintenance staff,

so the pilots had to kill time this way. The dwarf who was tough amongst the craftsmen—the Boss was still lively, but he couldn't do much by himself. "The five Tellestarle are officially completed, but from the looks of things, I don't know when the rest of the repairs will be done." "Ah? There will be progress in the next few days. Right now, we are on vacation." The Boss answered Edgar ambiguously. Helvi drew a card and discarded the last card in her hand, leaving Edgar and Dietrich to duke it out. "Oh, yeah. Boss, my Guyale is still in pieces right?" "Oh, that's correct. Come again when we are open for business." Dietrich suddenly thought of this question, and the Boss gave a casual reply. Since the craftsmen were short handed, it couldn't be helped. Dietrich who lost to Edgar leaned onto the table weakly. "Anyway, Di, please help the winners buy some snacks." "Yup, a cheap pie would do." "I want to eat meat, so buy something with that." "Well, okay. Wait... Hey Boss, you didn't take part right!!" "Don't be so petty, just treat it as a gesture of thanking me for all the times I took care of you." Dietrich's face alternated between green and white before resigning himself, dragging heavy footsteps towards the cafeteria. The three of them looked on with the ease of victors, seeing him off. When that gloomy back disappeared from view, the Boss thought of something. "It's not worthy of compliments, but that fellow is easier to get along with now. Before this, he would keep yammering whenever he loses, and would definitely play cards with me." The Boss smiled wryly, the smile under his beard was hard to see as usual. Dietrich's neurotic and hard to please personality was famous among the maintenance department and the pilots. He was capable, but not someone easy to get along with. They had the chance to work with him often, so they had noticed that Dietrich had become rather low profile. "He changed after the Behemoth Incident. Dietrich has mostly changed for the better." "By the way, he was the one most passionate about the Tellestarle experiments right?" Helvi recalled something related, too. Helvi, who took on the role of test pilot from the very start had the most experience, followed by Dietrich who started piloting Tellestarle after that. Edgar nodded with a surprised expression. "That's right; maybe... it was because of Ernesti. Di was the only one who saw him pilot during that incident." Edgar answered Helvi with a stern face. Edgar's expression displayed his passion and commitment as a pilot. It might be a coincidence. It might just be by chance, but his friend had the opportunity to witness the skills capable of fighting against a battalion level Demon beast and it made him jealous; and his friend's ability has obviously risen to a new level, which impressed Edgar. Edgar was a just person— although he might be too stubborn about it at times. Helvi, who knew him for quite some time understood that Edgar would work harder when he sees the people around him put in so much effort. "Hmm- that boy, huh. He is small and agile, if you don't work hard, he will leave you in the dust." The eyes under the slightly curled short hair squinted cheerfully, teasing Edgar. Edgar didn't know how to respond and reverted back to his nonchalant smile. "I won't be left behind so easily." "Oh, now that you mentioned it, I have something to discuss with the silver boy." The Boss suddenly clapped, and noticed the question on the faces of the other two. "Well, making a new model is all good, but I am thinking about what to do next." "Repairing the rest of the machines on campus?" "I have permission from the dean, so there's no hurry... but we can't just abandon the new models after reaching this stage." The Boss mumbled, his eyes looking at the evening sun. Edgar and Helvi gasped and looked at each other. With the bell ringing to signal the end of the lessons, stalls started appearing around Laihiala Pilot Academy. In no time, the students who were dashing out after school could be seen. "Hey,

little miss, not bringing your armour along this time?” “Yes, we will be eating while walking like this today! Give me three pies!” “Alright! What fillings do you want?” “Let me think...” The last bit of blue was gone from the sky, which made the people watching it feel uneasy. Eru compared Ady, who was ordering her snacks with the stall owner cheerfully, with the weather. He thought it would be better if the weather had the same mood as Ady. “Don’t think about it too much, it will rain if you drag it for too long.” “You are right. But how should I put this, I feel that if we don’t accompany Ady more today, our relationship would turn bad.” “... Oh. Eh, let’s worry about that after it rains.” Ady turned around at this time with a smile on her face, and hot pies in her hands. Would it rain first or would she have shopped until she was satisfied— Eru was wondering about trivial things. After this, they visited a lot of stalls, and when they were almost full, they made a trip to the workshop. There was no special reason for this; they would just go there to see the strange sights from time to time. “... What are you doing?” “Eh? As you see, we are playing ‘Kuuklen’. Ara, David is a formidable opponent.” Under the shelter of the workshop, the dean of Laihiala Pilot Academy was playing a board game similar to chess on earth with the Boss. Lauri had the overwhelming advantage in the board, and seemed to be bullying the Boss, pushing him close to defeat. “I am out of ideas on how to turn this around... could you go easier on me?” “Kekeke, as an educator, I can’t go easy on you right?” “This is just a game...” Unlike the smiling Lauri, Boss’s face looked ready to crumble if he wasn’t supporting it with his hand. He was unwilling to admit defeat, but also had a look of resignation, knocking the chess board with an extra chess piece. “No, playing games is fine. I am just curious why grandfather is here.” “Eh? That’s right; there was something I want to discuss with you and David. I wanted to call you to the Dean’s office, but I figured you all might be here.” Eru didn’t imagine that his grandfather’s thinking was so haphazard and almost fell down. After ravaging the Boss, pushing him and checking him on the chessboard, Lauri was finally satisfied and ready to speak. The Boss, who was treated as a means to kill time sighed, not bothered by this small matter. “The things I wanted to discuss with the both of you is no other than the new models. David seemed troubled by it, too... It is regarding what to do with the new models in the future.” Eru and the others took a seat, feeling surprised by this sudden topic. “Frankly speaking, I was only expecting slight improvements. I was wondering what it took so long, and the results in the end were beyond my imagination.” “Because this is truly a new model machine.” Eru’s cheerful answer made Lauri’s shoulders droop. “I didn’t expect you to create something out of nothing. To progress to this stage, are you planning to present it to His Majesty?” Lauri’s words didn’t feel like a question, and seemed more like requesting confirmation. Because for him, the new model with the improved performance compared to the old models was more than enough to fulfil the king’s request for the ‘best machine’. Reporting the new model to the King and receiving his well deserved rewards was the natural progression of things. But things went contrary to his expectation as Eru shook his head firmly. “Oh? I thought that’s why you were working so hard for... is that wrong?” Lauri’s eyes widened from surprise, he then turned his head to glance at Tellestarle. “I have something else to show His Majesty... I am thinking about something that would let His Majesty acknowledge that promise. Since his majesty requested for ‘the best’, I have to give it my all, too.” “You are not giving it your all yet!?” Listening to Eru’s firm statement, the Boss, who was shocked, almost knocked the chair over and retorted. No one imagined Eru’s series of action that defied common sense was just the beginning,

which was outside of Lauri's and the Boss's expectations. "Yes, Tellestarle is the foundation... after stabilising the foundation; I want to construct a grand castle on top of it. That should give His Majesty the shock of his life." "I think we will die from shock before that." "And the boy only knows how to tell the truth, that's the scary part..." Lauri changed from surprise and amazement to resignation. He wasn't the only one; everyone else felt the same way. Lauri took a deep breath to change his thoughts, grunting as he crossed his arms. "Since Eru said so, this matter is settled. But anyway, since we completed the new model, we have the obligation to report it to the nation." "That is natural. So in the end, we will still be reporting it to His Majesty?" Lauri gave a negative response to Eru's query. "His Majesty is also busy with work. He might have made a promise with you personally, but we can't settle this so casually. We will probably need to go through the proper channels." "The proper channels... you mean the NTR Lab..." National Technological Robotics Laboratory, and known to the public as 'NTR Lab'. As its name implies, it was an organisation that manages the development of Silhouette Knight technology. From major projects such as development of new machines to minor details like improvement maintenance techniques, all things related to Silhouette Knights were handled by them, and communicated to the rest of the nation. The academy took part in technical enhancement before, so the Boss with his background as a craftsman was familiar with this organisation. "Eh,... that might be so, but there are problems with bringing the whole thing there." "Hmm? Grandpa Lauri, what's the problem? This thing is strong right? If we start making a bunch of Tellestarle, the Knights would have it easier and the city would be peaceful. To improve to such an extent, the important people would be happy, too, right?" Chid, who interrupted with questions tilted his head in confusion. What he said wasn't wrong, promoting strong Silhouette Knights was an effective way of guaranteeing the Kingdom's security. While they were discussing this, a large Demon beast larger than duel level was attacking the Kingdom somewhere, and Silhouette Knights were suppressing them. Silhouette Knights turning stronger meant shortening the time to defeat Demon beasts, which would reduce the level of damage. For the Kingdom of Fremmevira, which was equivalent to the frontline of the battle against Demon beasts, this had priority over anything else. Why would reporting the construction of Tellestarle to the authorities be anything to worry about? Lauri's smile had a hint of bitterness as he answered: "It can be done... but making Silhouette Knights require a fixed process. It starts with accumulating small improvements, and a few engineers would use this as the foundation and apply them to the final product. Silhouette Knights are strengthened by repeating this process." Constructing new Silhouette Knights were the responsibilities of the NTR Lab, and in terms of scale, only the NTR Lab was capable of doing that. Lauri remembered this part and continued: "Developing new Silhouette Knights is a national level project; I never imagined we could make an entire new model with the facilities on campus. Well, an idea that could revolutionise doesn't come along that easily..." Eru and the Boss looked towards the distance, as if they were avoiding Lauri's eyes. Both of them remembered doing crazy things in order to complete the machine they wanted. "Eh, that's it, the problem is that the suggestions we submitted are usually minor, and there are no precedents for submitting an entire new model. If we suddenly show up with a new machine, we won't know how they would handle it." When Lauri saw Eru's smiling face, who was ready for battle, Lauri sighed softly. "Grandpa, what's done is done, sighing over it is useless. Now is the time for us to grab hold of our happiness and take a step towards

the future.” “Well said. Those who have the knowledge and don’t apply it are not engineers. We will handle the things in the future when the time comes!” “You two are really confident about this...” Seeing Eru and the Boss squeezing out a smile with folded arms, Lauri felt he was a step away from reaching enlightenment. It might seem like a joke to outsiders, but they weren’t taking it lightly. The Boss changed his pose and started speaking. “Also, applying new technology in practical use is the pride of craftsmen. We would get rewards which would fatten our wallets, too. The fastest way would be to pilot Tellestarle to see the King, but regrettably, there is still one problem.” The Boss jokingly gestured with his hands and continued: “The completion of Tellestarle involved a lot of people, about half the students in the pilot faculty took part. The rewards for completing the new model must be significant, but wouldn’t it be chaotic if we had to divide it with everyone who took part?” The Boss had a valid point. Providing new technology to NTR Lab would be compensated with monetary rewards, and that would naturally be divided among the ones who help develop it. As the Boss said, many people were involved in the construction of Tellestarle. They included the proposer Eru, the craftsmen doing the assembly and the test pilots. Even the alchemist who developed new materials; it was quite a number. But in reality, it’s impossible to ascertain how much each individual contributed. Not just the way to report about Tellestarle, just the mountain of problems was enough to make you give up. “Can I say something? I have an idea...” Breaking the tense atmosphere, Edgar raised his hand slightly. Lauri, who was preparing to leave ignored the two who were clapping to ‘welcome’ the hero, going into dean mode once again. “Yes, no matter what opinion you have, do tell.” “Pardon me. Leaving the way to handle the aftermath aside, Tellestarle is not complete yet, but its performance is still better than the current model. By spreading knowledge of the prototype out, it would definitely benefit the national security greatly. Anyway, it would definitely be conveyed to the administration... Is that correct?” “Yes, that is true.” Everyone present expressed their agreement. No one thought about making the new model exclusive to the academy. After confirming this point, Edgar lowered his eyes to organise his thoughts. “... So... There is definitely a problem with the rewards, but we need to consider the matter of handing Tellestarle over. No, I’m not talking about the way to do it; I just think the matter would not be over so easily.” “Anything wrong?” “Think about the situation when Ernesti first made the proposal, Boss. We are used to it, but the technology behind the construction of Tellestarle is unusual.” After hearing this, everyone remembered this fact that was almost forgotten and quietened in enlightenment. If Eru didn’t explain to them directly, they probably wouldn’t believe in this technology. There was one thing they kept forgetting after seeing Tellestarle’s performance: it was still an abnormality in this world. The Boss, who remembered this point clapped his hands together and said: “Yah, that’s right, everyone was wondering if the boy had gone insane.” “So, you did doubt me...” After everyone understood that, Edgar continued: “In other words, it would be meaningless to just hand Tellestarle over right? They can see the exterior design and imitate it, but it would be hard to explain the interior design concepts.” All of them looked at Eru. Under their pressure, even Eru was backing off a little. “... By the way, letting the people in NTR hear the ‘whispers of the devil’ seems like a good idea.” “Is that how everyone looks at me...?” “Like I said, we should fully utilise the devil right?” “... I will cry, okay?” Ah, Eru looks cute when he is unhappy. Eru glared at the Boss but the Boss remained unmoved, while Ady seemed happy about something. Lauri ignored them and turned to

Edgar. Edgar was looking upwards, seemingly thinking about how to express the idea he had already thought of in words. Lauri who saw through that, hurried him. "I am not sure... if this is the way to resolve this. I think there is a need for the craftsmen of the pilot faculty to explain to the NTR Lab. In that case, asking them to hire all the members involved in developing the new model is a way, too, right?" Lauri couldn't help his eyes widening. Edgar's proposal was to use their employment as a substitute for the distribution of the reward money. Since the craftsmen would graduate from the academy eventually and join the workforce, this was a good career path, too. "This method... Is a grand proposal." "With their accomplishment of completing the new model and their knowledge of the current technology, they are the ideal talents for the future development of the new models." This proposal put Lauri in a dilemma. From the perspectives of teaching proper skills and the well being of the students, this was definitely a win-win situation, but the academy would be the one that receives the most benefits. Which means NTR Lab would definitely negotiate with the academy, and that would be another highly difficulty task. And it would be up to Lauri and a few other teachers. They were teachers after all, not professional negotiators, so it was easy to imagine how the road ahead would be. "This proposal is very alluring, but I don't know if it would proceed so smoothly. We will do our best and give it a try... But it is still up to the decision of the NTR Lab." Since the Kingdom would be the one to decide, Lauri couldn't guarantee anything. It would be enough if they can decide their stance in general. Although he had a feeling that the negotiations ahead would be grueling; but as an educator, and with his pride in defending his student's efforts, Lauri smiled with a hint of bitterness. After finally finding a way to forge ahead, the group that was discussing was engrossed in conversation. But two of them, Chid and Ady had a troubled expression. They barely understood the contents and were finding it hard to keep up. Unlike Eru, whose mental age differed from his physical appearance, asking two actual twelve year olds to join in the discussion was too demanding. "Erm— is there anything we can do to help?" "It sounds difficult. It can't be helped, we will just watch quietly." They spent a lot of time with Eru who wasn't like a kid, so they had a lot of chance to take part in such talks, and they were always thinking about how they could help out. Simply put, because the Boss and the others worked hard on Tellestarle, they will continue to do so, right? Ady had a few terms she was concerned with— new, Silhouette Knight, construct, end. Her thoughts flew through her tunnel of memories with these vague terms— and linked it to the things she was told a few months ago. She suddenly realised something and lifted her head anxiously. "... Eh, they said Kingdom, so you have to ask a great person for that right? We could use that promise right?" "Hmm? That is true... promise?" That promise— The meaning in Ady's words confused Chid for a moment, and he found the answer within his memories too. "Ah!... Right, this is Eru's merits too." That was the memories of their conversation with their father. Their father — Marquis Joachim Serrati asked this of the two of them, 'If he had any contribution, please inform me'. In the heart of the twins, the existence of their father was equivalent to a way out of this stalemate. "Nah, Grandpa Lauri. We have a suggestion." "Oh, Chid? What is it?" Lauri thought the twins would ask some questions at the most, and was surprised that they had suggestions. Chid didn't seem to be happy about that, and had the expression of a kid who had thought of a mischievous idea as he voiced out his proposal. "It would be hard for grandpa and the others to negotiate, right? How about getting an important person to be your partner?" "Oh? An important figure... do

you have anyone in mind?" "Marquis Serrati." Chid's straightforward reply surprised Eru and Lauri, while the others felt confused. Some of them knew from previous incidents of the twin's history, but it wasn't widely known. Mentioning the name of such a powerful noble baffled them. "...! Yes, that's right... If it's Marquis Serrati, he was present back then too. It will be easier to explain it to him, and ask him to cut through the bureaucratic red tape. But... will it be okay?" What he wanted to ask was the situation of the twin's family. They are illegitimate children, and should be avoiding contact with the main family. Could we really ask your father? The twins understood what Lauri was conveying through his eye contact. "Father told us before, if Eru did anything, he wants us to inform him." I see, so they agreed. So discussing this with the Marquis would be appropriate. "I see... If the two of them are fine with it, I have no objections. What about everyone else?" The others looked surprised, and looked at each other when they were asked. Speaking of Marquis Serrati, he was one of the few elite aristocratic clans. Marquis Serrati's territory was next to the Bocuse Sea of Trees, so he would understand the importance of the Silhouette Knights' performance. Putting why the twins mentioned this name aside, if they could gain the Marquis' support, he would be a powerful ally. They looked at each other to confirm, and nodded firmly. "We have no objections." "Well then, sending the Tellestarle over wouldn't do. How about briefing the Marquis with the documents?" "Yes, that's a good idea. Can I leave the preparation of the documents to David? Chid, Ady, the rest will be in your hands..." The twins stood up straight and accepted the task with a pat on their chest. Solving the problem made everyone at ease, and they laughed at the twins' liveliness. Tellestarle which was situated in the depths of the workshop watched over this scene. After the sun set in the evening, the shops on the streets closed one after another. Conversely, now was the time for the bars to open for business. The citizens who finished their day of work came to relax and enjoy their meals, flooding the place in doves. A certain bar in Laihiala Academy City welcomed the busy period as usual. Most of the patrons were elderly gentlemen, but there was a strange customer who took a seat in the corner. He appeared young, probably a teenager still at school. Since he was in the bar, he was an adult (fifteen years old). He seemed very familiar with this place, blending in with the atmosphere and drinking beer by himself. As he was about to finish his first glass, someone sat down opposite him. For there to be an empty seat in this bar that was almost at full capacity, this meant the two of them had arranged to meet up. That man who appeared was burly and looked like a worker ordered a beer right after sitting down, and smiled at the student. "How rare for you to find me for a drink. How is it? Is it hard studying at the academy?" The burly man took a swig after getting his beer and breathed out exaggeratedly. The student who already drank a bit replied excitedly: "Ah— that's right, it's been hectic lately." "Hahaha! That's how studying is. If you can overcome this part, you will become somebody!" "You are right, but it's been really bad recently." The two of them drank and chatted, complaining about their life happily. Their conversation became part of the noise in the bar. "I thought I got over the hill, but I ran into a small problem." "Haha, the life of a student is hard!" Even if they conversed loudly, no one would bat an eye, that's the kind of place a bar was. Picking on the rumblings of drunkards would lead to nowhere. And if you look around the place, they were drunkards talking noisily everywhere. At this point, it didn't matter if another noisy fellow joined in the racket. These two who seemed to be part of the drunkards suddenly observed their surroundings. After confirming that no one was paying attention to them, they suppressed

their voice. “Right! Really!... That thing’s completion is ready for the next phase.” “Oh? The students are quite capable.” The whispers of the two wouldn’t reach the ears of the other people because of the din in the bar. The student’s face was red because of the alcohol, while the burly worker with a beer in hand looked just like a drunkard, but the things he said were calm and clear. “You can’t underestimate something like passion. Seems that this technology will be completed sooner or later.” “The details? You are not thinking about telling me verbally, right?” The student shook his head, signaling that was impossible. He quietly took out a stack of papers. The cover was plain and undistinctive, but the content was information related to the new machine model. The burly man accepted it openly, putting it in his coat without a word. “Like I said, we need to have a drink together some time!” “You got that right! Okay, today I will treat the student who had worked hard to a few glasses!” “That’s the spirit!” The atmosphere from before was gone without a trace, and the two reverted back to simple patrons as they toasted their glasses. The bar got more rowdy as it got closer to midnight; no one paid them any heed or understood what they talked about under the table. Heavy rain fell onto the stone paved roads covering the imperial capital Känkänen. The drizzle at dawn turned into a downpour, clouding over the entire city. The unexpected rain made the residents, who were always full of life reluctant to leave their house. The streets seemed to have lost its energy. The boundary between the overcast sky and the stone pavement blurred together, becoming one in the monochromatic background. Marquis Joachim Serrati was inside his mansion located in the aristocratic district, browsing through a document as he listened to the rain outside. On it was a sketch of an alien shaped Knight that was the calm before a storm. It had an air of chaos that would threaten to swallow an entire city. His crude movement in pressing the bell on his table probably reflected the Marquis’ mood, it was rare for him lose his cool. The experienced butler who had served him over many years was composed as usual, and appeared in his office faster than normal. “Master, your orders?” “Bring this document to Duke Dixgard’s mansion as fast as you can. Make sure you hand it to the Duke in person.” “Yes, I will arrange for it immediately.” Joachim handed the documents to the butler and spoke after the butler left: “Duke Dixgard, this might be a bigger issue than we had imagined.” His words were blocked behind the thick doors of his office, fading into the sounds of the downpour.

Knights & Magic - Volume 2 - Chapter 14

Fuu, fuu, the raging wind howled. A convoy consisting of several carriages braved the wind coming from the sides, moving along at full speed on the Highway of Fremmevira. If the weather was clear, the sound of the horse hooves would definitely be heard, but it was overshadowed by the storm. The weather that had been deteriorating since the beginning of the month could turn into a storm in no time. The rain kept falling during this time, seemingly strong enough to scrape up the earth. The downpour exceeded the water runoff rate of the paved roads of Fremmevira. Large puddles appeared one after another which blocked the way. In this weather and road condition that was not suitable for outdoor activities, the convoy persevered on. And, looking towards their destination; the vague image of the largest education facility in the nation— Laihiala Pilot Academy, which was situated in Laihiala Academy City. “Really, it’s pouring down hard.” The dean of the Laihiala Pilot Academy— Lauri Echevarria frowned, as he looked at the rain outside the window while he stroked his beard. The rain that rarely fell had been ongoing nonstop recently. It even affected the progress on some of the classes, which troubled the dean. Suddenly, the sound of knocking pulled Lauri’s thoughts back to the present. “Hmmm, who is it?” He walked back to the quaintly designed dean’s office desk, and answered as he sat down. He heard a voice informing him that there were guests visiting. Lauri thought for a moment, but didn’t recall having any prior engagements. He was the dean, but Lauri was just the person responsible for managing the staff of the academy, and held no special authority. Even so, there were a few visitors that required his immediate attention. There had been cases of abrupt visits by guests, but most of them were important persons with busy schedules, and would make appointments early in order to save time. That might be so, but with the terrible weather, it’s no wonder the other party didn’t contact us in advance, Lauri thought. Or rather, to have braved such a storm to journey here, they must have come regarding urgent matters. Lauri answered hurriedly for the receptionist to usher the guest to the dean’s office. The guest appeared to be in the vicinity as the door opened shortly after Lauri’s reply. Seeing the guests enter with noisy footsteps, Lauri squinted his eyes, deepening his frown. “That emblem... is the Knights-sama serving under Duke Dixgard. What matters do you have for the academy to travel in such bad weather?” Before Lauri were three Knights. They were covered tightly in armour with a cape over their shoulders and a helmet under their arms, so it was impossible to mistaken their identity. Lauri identified the emblem on their cape, but couldn’t tell what they were here for. The Knights exerted a unique intimidation and dignity, bowing gracefully before Lauri and said: “Yes, we are from the ‘Red Rabbit Knights’ serving under Duke Dixgard.” The Knight standing in the middle introduced himself. He seemed to be the commander, who represented the others. “We are here by the orders of the Duke. First, this is the letter entrusted to me, please take a look.” Lauri received a package and retrieved a sealed letter from within. Duke Dixgard’s wax seal was clear under the light of the oil lamp.

Obviously, the only ones who could use this seal were the clansmen of Duke Dixgard. After confirming again that this was an official letter from the Duke, Lauri became more nervous. After acknowledging, Lauri started checking the content and his eyes widened as he read. When he was done and was about to speak, a flash of lightning dyed the entire room white, and the sound of thunder erupted a short moment later. It stunned the ear drums of all present, followed by the sound of the continuous rain, covering over the silence that was filled with a mixture of emotions. The classroom was filled with whispers that were suppressed by the sound of the rain. That thunder, just now, was especially loud. Although it was still day time, it was dark because of the terrible weather. The students discussed among themselves how shocking it was in the room illuminated by oil lamps. The teacher at the podium also looked out the window, but continued with his lesson after saying: "How frightening." Moments later, the classroom was filled with the sound of the rain. The teacher spoke louder to be heard over the rain, but sounded weak before the might of Mother Nature. Despite the distracting atmosphere and the shock from the thunder just now, the students, who were finding it hard to concentrate, still did their best to take down notes. Or rather, as they couldn't hear the lecture properly, they had to make up for it by looking at the blackboard. The students were giving their best too. The morning lesson ended with this subtle balance and was followed by the lively lunch hour. Laihiala students who were basically living on campus would eat at the cafeteria around the academy for lunch. If the weather was stable, there would be people eating out or at their homes, but it was not an option in this atrocious weather. As Ernesti and the twins were heading to the cafeteria, an unexpected guest walked into the classroom in a panic. That man— Mathias Echevarria, combat instructor whispered something to the teacher tidying up the blackboard. After the two of them came to a consensus, Mathias walked to Eru immediately. "Da... Echevarria instructor, what is the matter?" Eru asked his father, who was approaching silently. Mathias spent most of his time instructing students in the high school pilot faculty. If he was here in the middle school, it probably had something to do with Eru— that's the logical explanation. "I will explain later. Eru, come with me right now." Mathias nodded as he rushed Eru along with his words. Eru looked at Mathias' unusual demeanor, baffled, thought for a moment, and turned and looked behind him. Mathias followed his gaze and told the twins behind Eru, who was at a loss for words: "Ahh, sorry. Chid, Ady, lend me Eru for a bit." The two of them didn't understand the situation but still nodded. After Echevarria returned the nod, both father and son left the classroom together. "What's with Uncle Mathias? How unusual..." "I have a bad feeling." Chid and Ady spent quite a while staring blankly at the door the two of them left through. But when they remembered how crowded the cafeteria was during lunch time, they started moving in a hurry. We will just ask later— they thought. But they wouldn't find out for a very long time. When the afternoon lesson began, Eru still couldn't be found in the classroom. Ernesti and Mathias walked side by side through the corridor quietly. On one side was a burly combat instructor with his short blonde hair neatly combed; on the other side was a short boy with silver hair that reached to his shoulders. Because Eru looked like his mother, even taking the age difference into consideration, the appearance of the two were polar opposites. Even so, the aura emitted by the both of them was similar, and you could tell that they were father and son. They walked against the oncoming lunch time crowd, away from the cafeteria. They moved away from the school building and stepped into the zone where the training equipment was kept. As Eru walked, he guessed the

destination was the high school, and had a rough idea why they were in a hurry to find him. Eru walked in silence without asking anything. Unlike Eru, Mathias had other plans. He was probably wary about other people overhearing them, and slowed down when they were far enough from the school buildings and everyone else, and said: "Earlier, an envoy from Duke Dixgard visited father-in-law." Eru reacted one beat slower. "... Duke? Not someone sent by Marquis Serrati?" A few days earlier, Eru and the others accepted Chid and Ady's proposal to help with the new model. Eru thought that if there were visitors, it would likely be people related to Marquis Serrati. But Mathias' words were expected, which puzzled Eru. But he cast his doubts aside for now and prioritised on confirming the situation. "What are the envoys here for?" "They seemed to be here for the new Silhouette Knights models made by all of you. I don't know the details, but I heard it would be explained after gathering the personnel involved at the workshop." Eru could guess what the content was, but couldn't understand why. Marquis Serrati was definitely notified, but why did this 'Duke' come into the picture? Was it something that couldn't be solved at the 'Marquis' level?" Was the aid they asked for difficult to accommodate? Or was the new model hard to handle? Eru was almost lost in his own thoughts, but realised it was useless to consider all the possibilities and shook his head lightly. When Eru lifted his head, he looked into Mathias' eyes. Mathias' usual sharp gaze was filled with gentleness, his drooping eyebrows strengthening this impression. "You had always loved Silhouette Knights." Saying something trivial, Mathias patted the head that just reached the bottom of his chest. Sensing that his father's attitude was different than usual, Eru felt it was strange, but still replied frankly: "Yes, you know that is the reason I am here, Dad. I just didn't think I would have the chance to be involved with the actual thing so soon." "Yes, I am sure you learnt many things in order to get this far, and had been working hard. But..." Mathias' face stiffened and he continued. From his expression, Eru realised what his father was going to say. "Eru's new Silhouette Knight will cause a big stir." This might sound like a premonition, but it was almost a given. Just from the fact that a Duke had sent an envoy was enough to prove this. "It's not only good tidings, troubles will probably follow." Eru could see Mathias' worries; Eru's cute face had a hint of bitterness. Eru resolved himself to face a huge crisis; it would not be a surprise if the students in the pilot faculty were involved, since they were comrades. But Eru felt guilty about the possibility of dragging others into trouble. Not just Eru's actions; the current situation was all the result of Eru's willfulness. The recklessness of a normal child wouldn't be too problematic; it would just be treated as a prank, mostly. But, the things that occurred could no longer be considered as a prank. "But, if it's you, maybe you can solve any problem you face by yourself." As Eru was reflecting in his heart, Mathias started walking again. The soft words of his father didn't lose out to the sound of the rain outside the window, reaching Eru's ears clearly. Eru jogged slowly behind him, looking up at Mathias. Eru couldn't see Mathias' expression, but he could hear Mathias saying calmly: "But, even if you can do that; there is no need for you to do everything yourself." Mathias, who turned his head, met Eru's eyes. Once again, Mathias' big hand patted his head. "Just follow your dreams until the end, Eru. Tina and I believe in you and will support you. Father-in-law is also on your side. We will back you up if you run into any trouble, so don't hold back." "Yes Dad. I will rely on everyone if I need any help!" The entrance to the workshop was right before them. Eru had always walked through this door happily, but it looked as if he was walking towards a battlefield today. When they reached the workshop, they saw the

row of Silhouette Knights lined up against the wall as usual. The difference was that the craftsmen weren't working. On normal days, they would be busy running around, doing all sorts of maintenance on the Silhouette Knights placed on the platform; but they were discussing the sudden news uneasily today. Looking closely, all involved, including the pilots, were gathered here along with the craftsmen. As they hadn't heard the explanation, the atmosphere inside the workshop was a mixture of uneasiness and anticipation. Eru was an exception among exceptions; most students wouldn't have anything to do with a Duke. Most of the students who had merits in the fight had the chance to attend the award ceremony in the Imperial Capital Känkänen, but that's about it. This meant Duke Dixgard was someone who is an important figure of society, so the pressure from this summon was exceptionally heavy. Eru used his short stature to his advantage and squeezed through the crowd and approached an acquaintance. "Boss!" Eru shouted, which made David, who was deep in a conversation with Edgar turn his head, swinging his beard. "Oh, silver boy. Have you heard? Someone contacted us so soon. It's someone more important than I expected." "That shows how highly they evaluate us, right?" In order to block out the storm, the workshop was closed tightly and was unbelievably stuffy. The Boss fanned himself as he shrugged, while Edgar loosened the harness on his leather protective gear. "I didn't expect it to be so sudden." "To make this trip on such a rainy day, it must be hard on them, too." "Don't ever say that in their presence, Boss." The three of them chatted idly when they heard the mumblings around them grow louder. They didn't know what happened, and only saw an unfamiliar group entering the workshop when they turned their head. Their attire was obviously unsuitable for work—they were covered in thick armour, wearing a cape with an emblem on the outside. The pilot cadet's armour was made from leather that focused mainly on mobility, and was only reinforced with metal parts. With their full armour, they must be Knights. There were twenty in the group and all of them had the same attire. Their group might be small, but they were still a band of Knights. The group marched in with a clanking sound that was louder than the rain. The students couldn't help taking a few steps back in awe. One of the Knights walked in front and just happened to coincide with the students backing away. He seemed to be the representative of the Knights. "Are all those involved in the construction of the new Silhouette Knight model gathered here?" When they heard this, the students present looked at each other with a troubled expression. Who will represent the students to answer the representative of the Knights? The gazes bounced between them before settling in a certain corner. The Boss and Edgar endured their stares that were boring holes into their back, sighed in resignation, and walked forward like a sailboat blown by the wind. Eru, who was conversing with them was also dragged in and pushed to the front. "This is not everyone; there are still some alchemists involved, too. The craftsmen and test pilots are all here, though." The Boss gestured to the rear with his chin. This reply made Edgar hug his head while Eru almost fell. The Boss didn't change his rough attitude even in the face of Knights, in some way he was like a big shot. Hearing an affirmative reply, the Knight's expression became awkward for an instant. But when he thought about the Boss being from the crude dwarves, the Knight thought it was useless to correct his mannerism and decided to continue. "Great, that's good enough. I know all of you are students in the pilot faculty, but what about that child?" Understandably, the Knight was looking at Eru suspiciously. The Boss and Edgar wanted to introduce Eru, but didn't know where to start and closed their mouths again. For the pilot faculty, Eru's existence was a common sight.

But thinking about it carefully, Eru was still a middle school student. The Boss, who only just realised how strange it was for him to be here, was cramping his cheeks. Eru looked at the two who didn't know how to answer, understood the reason for their silence, and introduced himself naturally: "I am the one who proposed using new technology for the new Silhouette Knight model, and the one responsible for the draft design." "..... This child must be joking." "Eh, no, what he said is the truth. You can ask anyone here or even the dean. Everyone will give you the same answer." Despite hearing how convinced the Boss was, the Knight still couldn't wipe away the doubt in his heart. It might just be his imagination, but the students around him seemed to be looking at the Knight with sympathetic eyes. Even Eru, himself, understood nothing would be done if this went on. "Maybe you could confirm my identity later. But I am definitely involved in this." "... Alright. Dear students, I belong to the 'Red Rabbit Knights', and I am here on the orders of Duke Dixgard." The students turned rowdy once again. Second only to the King, the one with the highest nobility rank in the country had sent an envoy. Even though they already heard about this, the impact when the Knight introduced himself was still significant. "My lord is very interested in the new Silhouette Knight and wants to see it in action. He requests everyone to deliver the new machine models to the Duke's territory 'Fort Casadesus' as soon as possible. He is also requesting enough crew members to come along to ready the machine." In response to the Knight's words, the crowd answered with silence. Their tense emotions cooled down instantly. A feeling of doubt spread among the students. In this awkward atmosphere that wouldn't go away, the Boss meekly raised his hand. "Ah— Can I ask you something?" The Knight who was addressing them gave permission with a look, so the Boss stroked his thick beard and enquired: "I have no objections to presenting the new models to the Duke, but the weather is really bad and not suitable for piloting Silhouette Knights. Do we have to set off immediately?" "Of course, it's a direct order from the Duke. After so many classes in the pilot faculty, you should have training in traveling in the rain. That is not a reason to delay, please prepare to leave immediately." The Knight's face grew stern. Unsure of their intention, the Knights behind gave off a huge pressure. The air in the workshop turned heavy in an instant. But the Boss simply shook his head exaggeratedly, and said with a casual attitude: "No, don't get me wrong. Yes, I admit that traveling in such weather is a pain, but more importantly, the burden on the machine would be huge. No matter how much training we have, journeying in the rain is still difficult, and there is a storm out there. The new models aren't that fragile, but we shouldn't be reckless with them. Since we are presenting it to others, we wish to show it in its best condition. Isn't that better for everyone?" The Knight Captain lowered his head slightly, accepting that the Boss wasn't bringing it up because he hated the weather. But he maintained his headstrong attitude. "You have a point, but my lord's order requires me to make haste in the delivery. Force marching might result in some problems along the way, but the machine can be repaired after reaching its destination. That's why we are requesting you all to come along." After saying this much, the students couldn't turn him down. They could reject something if it was impossible. This request might be difficult, but could be done. A bunch of students couldn't protest the command of a Duke anyway, so they could only do their best. Even though there wasn't a choice, the Boss still sighed and shook his beard when he thought about the effort required. "I understand, let's hurry and get ready." The Knight finally nodded in agreement. The Boss turned and started issuing orders to the maintenance department, failing to hide his

annoyance. Silhouette Knights which walk like humans would also be affected greatly by the road's condition. If the rain kept pouring and softening the ground, preparations would be needed in addition to piloting skills: installing parts on the legs and covering the joints with waterproof materials. The well trained engineers shouldn't take long to finish that. As the maintenance department worked, Mathias spoke to the Knight. "Would the maintenance team and pilots be enough? They could start the machine up if that's what was needed." Mathias was worried about Eru and asked. Sensing what Mathias was implying, the Knight gave a precise answer. "No, the proposer has to come along, too. We didn't think it would be a child this young... Is it really him?... I see, it's true. If that is the case, the orders are to bring him along. No exceptions, even if he is not in high school, please let him come with us." The proposer had to be the central figure in the development of the new model. The Knight who thought this looked at the youth before him, still a bit doubtful. The students and teachers has no reason to lie, but how could it be a child this young? That was how he felt. Eru smiled and wasn't bothered by the suspicious gaze of the Knight. The situation was getting more complicated than he imagined. Eru felt a bit fazed, but shook his head quickly and pulled himself together. No matter what Duke Dixgard was scheming, Eru's goal wouldn't change. The new model was getting its debut. Eru made his resolve to complete it together with the high school students. Fortunately, the rain eased up while they were preparing and the storm had let up. The sky was still overcast with thick clouds and the rain was still falling. But, at least it was not a storm. The convoy set off from Laihiala Academy City. They were led by the carriage of the Red Rabbit Knights, with the student's carriage behind them and the Tellestarle in between their formation. There were limited methods to deliver the ten meter tall Silhouette Knights. They could use specialised carriages for transporting damaged machines, or break them apart to spread the load. Silhouette Knights would usually walk by themselves, and it was no exception this time, even if they were the stars of the show. The front of the Tellestarle and the rear of the convoy were guarded by the Red Rabbit Knights' Karrdators. There was the danger of Demon beast attacks along the way, so the important new models were kept as combat reserves, and not committed to immediate battle. The destination — Casadesus Fort, was situated to the north of Fremmevira Kingdom, within the territory of Duke Dixgard. The plan was to take the western Fremmevira Highway, and head north part of the way. The road there was paved with stone, and even with the unpredictable weather; it should be an easy trip. For the Silhouette Knights which had to carry their own weight, it was hard to walk on the muddy path caused by the rain. The pilots were also trained to move in wet conditions, but it wasn't something they were happy about. The rain fell on the Silhouette Knights who were traveling alongside the carriages and evaporated upon contact with the machine, which was hot from its operation. The steel Knight dragged its body that was emitting steam and forged silently ahead. The smooth journey ended when they got off the road as they turned towards the direction of the fort. While passing through a trail in the forest, they heard a weird sound that was obviously not a Silhouette Knight. "That sound... Tch, it's a Demon beast. All units watch the surroundings! Defensive formation!" The low grumble of the earth rumbling continued. In the Kingdom of Fremmevira, there were two types of existence that would make such a sound: either Silhouette Knights or Demon beasts. For Silhouette Knights, the sound of the parts churning should be audible. If not, the thing that would suddenly emerge from here would be a Demon beast. The source of the noise was

obviously approaching them. And, it is estimated to be at least duel level scale – a Demon beast that requires Silhouette Knights to fight them. There might be several of them, too. The battle hardened Knights aside, the horses pulling the carts were just normal horses, and the approach of unknown creature made them panic. The driver grabbed the reins desperately, preventing the horses from running out of control. But the horses were still in disarray, slowing down the progress of the convoy. The Silhouette Knights surrounded the slowing carriage, taking a defensive formation facing the surrounding forest. With the Demon beast making such a noisy entrance, there would definitely be movements in the forest. They took action assuming this, but the forest remained still despite the noise getting closer. “...No, it’s coming from around us... it’s from below!? Damn, how is that possible!?” One of the Knights noticed the direction the rumbling was coming from — and ‘that’ appeared, too. In the middle of the Silhouette Knights’ formation, the earth suddenly split open and something thin burrowed out. It maintained its momentum and drew an arc in the air, crushing the rocks when it touched the ground, and burrowing out of sight. There seemed to be no resistance against its movement when it broke through the ground that was paved with stone, like a fish leaping in a pond. What appeared was as thin as a rope— a rope that was one metre in diameter and twenty metres in length. Following its lead, the Demon beasts burrowed out of the ground one after another, a herd of Demon beasts started moving parallel to the convoy. There were about a dozen of them, shattering the ground as they moved on the stone paved road. “To attack at such a place! This is bad, if we stop here, they will hit us from below!” “Silhouette Knight team! Change formation...” Before the Knights could react to the attack coming from the unexpected direction, the Demon beasts gained the initiative. The beasts split to either side, jumping through the air in an arc towards the carriages. With its tip strong enough to shatter boulders, it destroyed the wooden carriages and the armour on the Knight as if it was nothing. Some of the Demon beasts pierced through the centre of the carriage, while the others attacked the horses, tearing them to pieces in seconds and disappearing underground. The carriage that lost its propulsion force skidded for a moment before falling over, becoming an obstacle for the ones behind. “We will be wiped out if we stop! Get out of the carriage...” The Knights attempted to fight back in the chaos. But, as if mocking their efforts, the situation changed again. A Karrdator lifted its sword, moving in to help, but was stopped when the ground around its feet changed suddenly. The ground bulged and a humongous Demon beast much larger than the others emerged from the below. “What, what is that...!” The ones witnessing this scene were in mortal danger, but they couldn’t help standing there stunned for a few seconds. The moment the Demon beast showed up, screeching noise of hard materials scraping against each other could be heard. Its shape was like a thin rope similar to the other Demon beasts, but its diameter exceeded six metres— more than half the height of a Silhouette Knight. The front was covered with a lot of shell armour, overlapping with each other and spinning at high speeds; built just like a tunnel boring machine on Earth. The spinning armour grinded everything in the path of the Demon beast into pieces and into its body, be it ground, stone or Silhouette Knights. The Karrdator’s legs were shattered by the Demon beast’s onslaught in an instant. After losing its legs, the Karrdator’s upper body was tossed into the sky, and tumbled when it fell onto the ground. At the same time, the giant Demon beast and its smaller counterparts touched the ground after flying in an arc through the air, burrowing underground with a pile of dirt in its wake. The sudden destruction of a Silhouette Knight was a huge blow for

the Knights and students, but they didn't have time to just stand there. "Abandon the carriage! Run! You will be swallowed from below if you stop!" The rumbling sound mercilessly approached the destroyed carriages and the ones preparing to carry the injured. Even with their high levels of training, the Knights were helpless against the enemies hiding underground. They grinded their teeth anxiously, but that only made them more frustrated without solving anything. "Damn it! Demon beast bastards! Look at what you have done!!" The casualties weren't just the Knights, the students on the carriages were also attacked and several students were dragged in. The survivors dragged the raging Boss from the carriage in a hurry. The encirclement of the Demon beasts drew closer with each passing second, the chaotic group was forced to the edge. At this point, the Knights and students who had left the carriages finally composed themselves. They paid attention to the ground beneath them, ready to attack, planning to strike the moment the beasts popped out. Among this group that was screaming their heads off was a short student with a strange weapon in each hand, Ernesti. "Shaker worms... another troublesome fellow." Shaker worms were a type of gigantic worm-like Demon beast. The front end was tightly covered with small pieces of shell, forming an end with overlapping armour that spins to grind through the ground, pushing the dirt into its body, a living tunneling machine. They used the intestines within them to digest the things within the earth, absorbing nutrients. The unused parts were expelled out behind them, which propels the worm forward. More importantly, it could attack from underground which was hard to defend against, a Demon beast known for being hard to handle. Eru recalled the information of these Demon beasts and felt baffled. "But the shaker worms shouldn't be bigger than two metres in diameter... What is that thing? Some sort of leader?" "Who knows! And, why are you so calm!" "Alright, don't be so loud, Boss. It's hard to handle them when they are underground. But they are noisy when they move, so we can determine its general location from the sound." The Boss shut his mouth and gritted his teeth so hard it was almost audible. He was full of wrath, ready to wield the hammer in his hands. If possible, he wanted to smash the Demon beast's head in, personally. "That's how it is. So, Boss, please back off a little. Get away from me." After hearing Eru say that, the Boss didn't bother answering and sprinted at his top speed. The tremours underground also approached speedily, splashing the water puddle around Eru's feet. Before the Boss, who was turning his head back as he ran, the shaker worm burst out right next to Eru's feet. The scene made the Boss tense. He didn't think the shaker worm would swallow Eru so easily; but, it was still bad for his heart. Eru ignored the worried Boss, casting Aero Thrust to leap the moment the shaker worm flew out. The shaker worm stretched its body, chasing after Eru with amazing speed. But Eru accelerated in mid air once more, shaking off the Demon beast's pursuit. He maintained his posture and extended the gun staff, Winchester, in his hands. "Welcome, taste this!" Shaker worms could burrow freely in any direction underground, but they couldn't change their momentum once they were in the air. The two Winchesters fired repeatedly at the front end of the Demon beast that was covered tightly with shells. The piercing lances pelted the shaker worm and exploded upon impact. Even though the shell armour of the shaker worm was powerful enough to shatter boulders, it couldn't withstand the consecutive magic attacks. The pinpoint attack blew up the armour, and the subsequent spells entered the hole and imploded inside. The intense pressure burst the body from the inside. About twenty percent of the front end of the shaker worm exploded, breaking into pieces in midair. A second later, the Demon beast stopped all signs of life, its body parts

stabbing onto the ground. “Sorry for the wait.” After confirming that the shaker worm exploded, Eru did a flip and landed. The air suspension spell splashed the water puddle and mud, absorbing the impact. Eru then ran to support the other students and Knights against the shaker worms’ attack. In order to deal with the Demon beasts attacking from underground, the Knights and students didn’t use a close formation, and spread out instead. The thing they had to watch out for was the attack coming from beneath their feet, so they observed the ground attentively. “Be careful of tremors! Run if you feel them coming, don’t stop!!” “Coming, watch your right!” The shaker worms burst out from the ground, attacking the people trying to dodge them. They were powerful underground, but if they wanted to attack creatures on the surface, they had to burrow out from the ground. If they burrowed out of the ground too fast, they would be exposed defenselessly in the air. That was the chance to attack. “Damn worms! Don’t look down on humans!! The students and Knights were in disarray after the surprise attack, but were countering fiercely now. Every swing of their staff shot out a fireball, just like crimson flowers blooming in the rain. The shaker worms hit hard by the explosion fell heavily onto the ground; there were some that simply exploded in mid air. The Knights and students delivered the final blow before the shaker worms could escape underground. The skin of the shaker worm was tough from the abrasion against the ground, but it was weaker when compared to the armour at the front end. The Boss charged at a shaker worm that was downed by a fireball and smashed his hammer down with all his might. “You dare lay a hand on my men!?”



This blow used the powerful muscles of the dwarves to its limit, breaking into the area not covered by shell armour. The hammer smashes with incredible momentum, splitting the hide of the Demon beast and digging into its insides. The impact permeated through the worm, turning it into mush as it was broken into two. Without organs to emit sound, the worm spasmed soundlessly and collapsed. The Boss confirmed the worm's demise and pulled out the gruesome hammer that was embedded inside the Demon beast's body. He swung it around and readied himself. "Come at me, bro! Next! Hell, all of you come at me! I will send all of you flying!!" With his mighty aura, both the Demon beasts and the students were afraid of him. The small shaker worms were defeated with the consecutive attacks from the Knights and students. They could handle the small sized Demon beast thanks to the efforts of the Silhouette Knights team. About some distance away from them, the giant shaker worm dubbed 'leader' by Eru was rampaging around. When the Silhouette Knights team realised the leader was more interested in Silhouette Knights than humans, they immediately pulled away from the students. The intelligence of shaker worms was low, so the leader took the bait and was lured into the forest. With its diameter more than half the size of a Silhouette Knight, the forest and ground were ravaged. The woods which obstructed movement was a disadvantage for the Silhouette Knights. Even though its intelligence was no match for humans, no one could fight against the leader. Despite knowing they were in a bad situation, they still pulled the battle away from their traveling companions. "Damn it—!!" Tellestarle one piloted by Helvi charged forward as she roared. The two back weapons deployed on her shoulders moaned and fired a series of magic shots. It hit the body of the leader directly, but, as expected of a colossal beast more than a hundred metres long, it was tough and didn't seem affected. "What's with this?! Not taking any damage despite getting hit, isn't this cheating!?" Against the leader that was twisting its thick and long body as it moved, the Silhouette Knights could only attack sparsely. The enemy was too large; the damage the magic shot could deal was limited. With the Silhouette arms ineffective, they could only rely on the swords of the Karrdator. But the slashes were not very effective against the leader either. Compared to the weak attack of the Silhouette Knights, the strike of the leader was deadly. A Karrdator that was almost caught by the leader raised its shield to parry. The surface of the shield shrieked against the body of the leader, spraying out a lot of sparks. The shell spinning at high speed grounded the shield into shreds. The Karrdator was sent flying from the collision, lucky to lose just its left arm and shield. An ally ran to the fallen machine. "Are you okay!?" "Ugh!... The shield and left arm are gone, but I can still move. I can still swing my sword!" "Tellestarle, rally to me!" Edgar used the sound amplifier built into his machine to shout over the din of the leader rampaging through everything. The Tellestarle team sneaked through the lashing body of the leader, gathering at the side of Tellestarle two piloted by Edgar. "What's the plan? Any good ideas?" "Yes. Spreading our attacks is ineffective, let's concentrate our firepower. Everyone prepare to attack head on with 'quadruple arms mode'. We will stop this thing." Although the plan was to concentrate firepower, they didn't expect Edgar to suggest a frontal assault. The Karrdator pilots would suspect that he wasn't right in the head or reject his proposal. But the students believed the new models could accomplish this objective. They smiled brilliantly in their

pilot seats, nodding firmly to express their acknowledgement. “Alright, let’s do this! Show them the power of Tellestarle!” The Tellestarle sheathed their melee weapons and threw away their shields. They drew the Silhouette arms hanging from their waist with each hand and deployed their back weapons. With four Silhouette arms in place, this was literally the ‘quadruple arms mode’. This showcased the capability of Tellestarle to use multiple Silhouette arms at the same time. With multiple Silhouette Knights concentrated at a single point, it roused the interest of the leader who locked on to them and attacked... Seeing the Tellestarle congregate in the way the tumbling beast was heading, a Karrdator pilot warned: “What are all of you doing!? It’s dangerous, disperse now!” “We are concentrating our Silhouette arms to attack! If that fellow retreats, don’t let it get away!!” The Tellestarle stood in a row as if to welcome the leader, aiming the reticle on the holo monitor at the centre of the leader’s maw. It was at a distance where they couldn’t miss. “Fire—!!” Under Edgar’s command, the five Tellestarle acted immediately. The total of twenty Silhouette arms, equivalent to the firepower of ten or more Silhouette Knights fired off at the same time. Backed by the large mana pool from the capacity frame made from sheet crystal tissue, the flames shot through the ever falling rain. The magic shots with fiery tails plummet onto the leader simultaneously; the carefully aimed magic bullets went directly into the leader’s maw. No matter how indiscriminate it was about food, it couldn’t eat Overed level spells. The front end of the leader was covered in a blooming brilliant fire. The Tellestarle kept on pouring out its concentrated fire, destroying the shell covering the worm’s front end. This forced the rampaging leader to slow down. The leader squirmed painfully. The explosion made the giant beast burrow underground in an attempt to escape. But the magic attack damaged the front end greatly, preventing it from digging into the ground. The colossal body just wriggled on the ground in pain. “Now is the time, attack! Finish it off, don’t let it escape!!” No one held back on the vulnerable enemy. The Karrdator raised their swords and spears to attack; the Tellestarle exhausted a lot of its mana, but they squeezed out a last spurt and charged in with melee weapons, slashing at the wounds made by the magic barrage. The leader that was struggling to escape was in tatters in no time. At this moment, a Tellestarle plowed down the halberd in its hands mightily. The strand crystal tissue made a melody similar to string instruments as it flexed to exert more power. The high speed and centrifugal force plunged the halberd into the body of the Demon beast, splashing its body fluids all over, mixing into the mud. The leader could not withstand the blow and split into half. No matter how strong the leader was, this was a fatal blow. The lifeless body crumpled onto the ground with a bang and stopped moving. The machines that took down the powerful Demon beast raised their arms in celebration. But, they were only immersed in the joy of victory before heading back to the place they were ambushed, to support the Knights and students. But when they walked out of the forest, most of the shaker worms had been vanquished under the wrath of the Knights and student’s counter attack. In the end, the leader was the hardest to handle. And, so, the roads became peaceful once again. “Sigh, the stinky worms caused us so much trouble.” After defeating all the worms, everyone finally relaxed and the Boss complained with a stinky face. Before him was the carriages that had turned into wreckages, and the carcass of the horses that were nothing but bones. “Can we salvage enough carriages to ferry everyone?” “No way, the damage can’t be repaired easily. No matter how much we rush, it would be great if we get half of them working. We are Silhouette craftsmen, not great with wood work.” The Knight who asked expected as

much and crossed his arms troubled. For them, losing most of the carriages was the biggest loss in this battle. “We have no choice, prioritise sending the wounded. Let the carriages that can still move ferry them to Fort Casadesus. The carriage is fine, but there are no horses? Let the Silhouette Knights pull it. There is a village a short distance from here, we will go there first. It would be great if we can borrow some means of transport there...” Everyone followed the command of that Knight and started moving. The Boss kicked the carcass of the worm grudgingly, but that didn’t help at all. The only thing they were thankful of as they walked was the rain letting up. When the group reached the village, they still couldn’t find a means of transport, so they had to wait for Fort Casadesus to send carriages to pick them up. They encountered Demon beasts on several occasions, but they were small compared to the leader and were kicked aside by the Silhouette Knights. And, so, although it was several days later than they planned, the students and Tellestarle finally made it to Fort Casadesus. “Alright, everyone start the inspection of the Tellestarle! Pay extra attention to the back weapon!” The Boss and the others started inspecting the machines immediately after moving into the workshop. After fighting an unexpectedly large beast, the Tellestarle required a full check up. The Boss led the maintenance department and repaired the machine with care. The craftsmen in the fort watched the scene curiously. They had a rough idea of what happened. They were torn between doubt and anticipation at first, but were awed when they saw the new models in the flesh. The Knights who escorted them were especially impressed, with many hoping the Tellestarle would be mass produced, or at least modify their machines with similar functions. They quietly looked forward for that day to come, but for now, they quietly watched over the fruits of their labor. Fort Casadesus lived up to its name as a fortress; the workshop was much larger than the one on campus. The Karrdator of the red rabbit Knights lined up in a row. With the Tellestarle standing beside them, it was a majestic view. A person leaving a silver trail behind made his way through the machines. It was Ernesti, who looked like he was dancing. He wasn’t a craftsman and didn’t have anything to do while the inspection was going on, so he was just strolling around. He looked at the rows of Silhouette Knights and had a smile ten times more brilliant than usual. “The hangar bays are awesome; it’s so wonderful to have so many Silhouette Knights...” A Knight looked towards Eru, who was praising the wonders of this world. In the eyes of outsiders, Eru looked just like a child excited to see a Silhouette Knight. The Knight smiled gently and told him: “The Duke is looking for you, could you come with me?” But, Eru, who turned his back didn’t look like a child. Using an example to describe him, he looked like a developer supervisor about to report to the department head, his expression was a mix of confidence, uneasiness, passion and weariness.

Going back to before the students set off from Laihiala Academy City. Laihiala Academy City was formed with Laihiala Academy at its core. There’s residence and shops. In the streets with buildings constructed tidily on either side, a man was rushing through the pavement. The storm had moved away, but the rain was still falling hard. The man finally reached a certain building. It was a place situated at a corner of a simple looking street. It didn’t seem to be a shop, and was probably a residence. The man opened the locked door with practiced hands and relaxed after entering the place. “What made you rush here in this rainy weather?” The woman at the other end of the room asked. The man went straight to the point and answered. “Emergency report from ‘hidden rat’.” The stern eyes of the woman squinted, giving off the impression of a sharp blade. The man looking at her

had the illusion of suffocating. “What is it? Did the student start a revolution or something?” “Duke Dixgard seemed to be eyeing that thing. We received report he had summoned them over with haste.” A hint of bitterness flashed across her face, but no further emotion was shown. She leaned onto the chair, folding her arms in deep thought. “... He beat us to the punch. I heard it wasn’t finished, that’s why I decided to wait and see; this is bad.” “I heard ‘that thing’ has already set off with some of the students towards the Duke’s territory. We have been had.” Hearing this, the wrinkles that were starting to become obvious, multiplied. She took a pile of documents from her desk and tossed it at the subordinate standing beside her. “Hmmp, nagging like this won’t help; sent this report back to headquarters at once. Don’t forget to add that this is to be given to ‘His Majesty’ immediately.” This was probably a routinal matter; the subordinate caught the documents skillfully, and expressed his acknowledgement before running out of the room. “... Alright, no time to mess around. Depending on the judgement by His Majesty, We might need to move out.” “Act directly... His Majesty is...” “Steel yourself. We need to prepare too, recall everyone immediately.” She answered with resolved in her eyes. The man nodded without a word and left the room. Shortly after, the only one left in the room was just her. There was no telling what she was thinking about, but from her serious expression, it wasn’t anything pleasant. “...Alright, seems like things are going to get busy.” Unexpectedly, there was a hint of joy in her voice, contrary to the contents of what she said. A week had gone by since Ernesti had left for Fort Casadesus together with the students from the pilot faculty. The boys and girls of Laihiala Pilot Academy walked in the rainy streets with their equipment for wet weather. There was some time before lessons started and the students living in the city were starting to leave for school. The figures of Batson, Archid and Adeltrud could be seen among the students commuting. In the midst of the students chatting happily, the moody twins appeared out of place. “Really! How long is Eru going to stay there? From what we heard, he should be back by now.” “That’s right! Ugh, if this goes on, there would be a deficiency in vitamin Eru...” “What vitamin is that...” They heard it would take about a week to make a round trip to Casadesus, but despite waiting so long, Eru didn’t show up. The primary reason was their encounter with the shaker worms, which threw their schedule into a wrench, but they didn’t know the details. In this world, with no method for long distance communication, they had no choice but to wait. “But, Eru left without us, is he taking our friendship too lightly?” “We helped in making Telle-chan too!... Though we were just watching from the side.” “How long are you going to complain about this?” The twins only found out about Eru heading for Fort Casadesus after he left. After the Behemoth Incident, being left behind, yet again, filled them with frustration that they had nowhere to vent. The circumstance was different from last time and couldn’t be blamed on Eru, since it was so sudden. But, the twins wouldn’t listen, and you couldn’t really fault them for that. But, they were not high schoolers, so they couldn’t barge in as they pleased. Since they could only wait helplessly, Batson was getting tired of consoling the gloomy duo. “Like-I-said, Eru is gone and there’s nothing we can do about it.” Listening to the same phrase said by Batson repeatedly for the past week, Chid crossed his arms dejectedly, while Ady, who was at the peak of her anger made up her mind about something, and waved her clenched fists. “No, we can’t give up! We have to pick him up ourselves! Unlike before, we have Silhouette gears, right!?” “... Then, where is our destination?” Unexpectedly, the one who pointed this out calmly wasn’t Batson, but Chid. “Eh? Erm... I heard he is in Duke Dixgard’s

territory.” “Where, exactly? The territory is huge, and we don’t know the way there, either.” Ady groaned and turned stiff with her fist raised. Even if the Silhouette gear’s speed exceeded horses, it’s pointless without knowing the destination. “I can’t accept this either, but he probably will be back soon. We just have to wait.” Chid still sounded unhappy, Ady pouted and turned silent. “... Eru... After you come back, I will punish you like a pillow.” Hearing Ady’s mumblings made Chid forget about his anger for a moment. He remembered that Eru needed a lot of effort to calm down his sister, and looked up into the sky. As for Eru in Fort Casadesus, he felt a sudden chill. And, so, they spent their days waiting gloomily. The story progressed a few days later, when the students from the pilot faculty finally returned to Laihiala Academy City. The convoy passed through the city gates of Laihiala Academy City. The Karrdator Silhouette Knights that were acting as escorts moved away from the carriages and entered a workshop near the city gates. The carriage continued advancing along the road, going all the way into Laihiala Pilot Academy. “Oh, our nostalgic home sweet home.” “It’s only been a week or so, Boss.” “I meant it metaphorically, asshole.” Shaking their limbs stiff from the long journey, the group from the Pilot Academy, including the Boss, dismounted. The desolated workshop regained a bit of life. But, the group was missing something they had when they first set off. First, none of the new models they brought to Fort Casadesus were with them. The one escorting them back was the Karrdators from the Red Rabbit Knights, and they had parted ways at the city gates. They came back empty handed. Not only that, everyone here was a student of the pilot faculty. The short youth who accompanied them wasn’t with the team. With the end of the lessons, school was out. Evening had come and the sun had set behind Mount Aubigne. Inside the dormitory of the middle schoolers, Stefania Serrati was doing her homework in her room. She flicked her blond hair that got in her way behind her, writing silently. When she had solved most of the problems and was about to take a break, there was a sudden visit from a guest. She thought it was a friend, but the knocking was hurried, which made Stefania dismiss that possibility. She walked to the door a bit confused. Stefania was the Student Council President, but the relevant work should have been completed. Thinking there was some urgent matter to handle, she opened the door with doubt in her mind. “Onnee-sama...! Please help us!!” Seeing her younger siblings looking so worked up, Stefania eyes’ widened and stood there frozen stiff. Tiffa did not estrange her siblings of a different mother, ushering them into her room. She thought with a smile: “How rare this is.” The gap between them had faded and they were on good terms, but this was the first time they had visited Tiffa’s room. But they didn’t seem like they were here to play. Unlike the brother who always showed an irate attitude, just by looking at her sister, who couldn’t keep her thoughts to herself, Tiffa could tell they wanted to ask something. Tiffa wanted to serve them some beverages, but Ady acted first. “Onnee-sama, you are the only one we can rely on!!” “Alright, I will listen to you, calm down. I will prepare something to drink, please wait a moment.” Using the chance while Chid was soothing Ady, Tiffa made some red tea. After the twins drank the tea, they calmed down a little, but they still went straight to the point. “... The Boss and the others are back from the fort visit, but Eru... Eru isn’t with them!!” The expression of Tiffa who was smiling warmly in the beginning turned serious gradually. After she heard about the completion of Tellestarle, contacting their father Marquis Joachim Serrati, the summon by Duke Dixgard and the students’ return, Tiffa lowered her gaze in deep thought. “Is that so... that incident back then had turned to this...” Tiffa didn’t know what plans their father had, but Eru was

definitely dragged in. Tiffa and the rest were saved by Eru's quick actions, so it was her turn to repay him this time. She made up her mind and stood up with a resolve expression. "I understand, let's go." "Onee-sama?" Ady looked at her in surprise. "Let's visit our father. He should be in Känkänen's mansion... we have to at least ask why." Hearing that, Chid and Ady nodded firmly and stood up, too. After deciding their objective, Tiffa acted fast. The next day, she abused— correction, used her authority as the Student Council President to the limit. Using the excuse of an important family matter, she stepped over the sighs and tears of the teachers, and Student Council members and brought Chid and Ady along to Känkänen. When her sister was asked about this incident some time later, she commented: "...I thought it would not be wise to go against Onee-sama." That day, the storm that should have passed fell on the Serrati residence in Känkänen once again, causing chaos. The servants couldn't stop the daughter of the Marquis adamant on walking in, and rushed to inform the master of the house. It wasn't clear if they were lucky or unlucky, but Joachim happened to be in the mansion, and the trio was brought to his study room. "Why the sudden visit? Tiffa, you should have school today, what are you doing here?" Seeing his daughter acting so agitatedly, Joachim questioned her the moment he saw her. When he saw Chid and Ady behind Tiffa, his frown deepened. "You all..." "Father, after seeing the both of them, you should know why we are here, right?" Tiffa didn't back down, despite seeing how displeased her father was and greeted him gracefully. She didn't change her calm and bold attitude; she wasn't the Student Council President for nothing. After experiencing the fight with a battalion level Demon beast, her mental strength was exceptional among all past Student Council Presidents. "... It's related to the new machine model?" "Not just that, it concerns the person behind the new model— their friend Ernesti Echevarria." Tiffa said before Joachim could continue, and became more and more agitated: "In the Behemoth Incident back then, many of the students including I, survived because of his efforts, but he was the only one who didn't return from the Duke's territory! I don't know what your plans are, father, but I won't allow harm to come to my benefactor!" Chid and Ady stood besides Tiffa, opposing their father. "Father, please give us a reasonable explanation." With no room for lies or escape, they forged ahead with the determination of entering a battlefield. "... That's the summary of what I gathered from my men." The Commander of the Red Rabbit Knights based in Fort Casadesus, Molten Fredholm, stood at attention as he read out the contents of the report. He was inside the top level war room in Fort Casadesus. It was usually not in use, and would double as a conference room when high nobles visit the fort. There was a table in the centre of the room surrounded by four chairs. Seated in one of them was the master of Fort Casadesus, 'Knut Dixgard'. After hearing Molten's report, Knut closed his eyes for a moment before expelling the heavy air in his lungs. "Alright, I understand the capability of the new models. What did our Knights think of them?" Molten's report was the investigation report of the new models during the shaker worms attack. "To be honest, I have to admit the combat performance is great. Even with double the number of Karrdators, we might not achieve similar results. Almost all the Knights who fought alongside them wished to implement the new models." Knut frowned slightly and groaned as he leaned back on his chair. Below the carefully combed hair was a prominent hooked nose making his facial features look more compelling. "... The new model is good for the nation. We can't leave it alone." Knut said softly and Molten nodded. "Molten, the students who constructed the new model would like to apply for the development of the

new technology— They request for us to mediate any problems that might occur.” Knut had a set of documents that was different from the earlier report. It was forwarded to him from Marquis Serrati, after he received it from Laihiala Pilot Academy, a report and request letter. “And, they would like to join the NTR Lab.” “Oh? Not just providing the technology?” “I quote, ‘We are the ones who are the most knowledgeable about the new models. If we can take part in the research related to this, we will definitely contribute to the technological advancement of Silhouette Knights.’” Knut read out a part of the request letter. Morton stroked his carefully groomed beard and laughs aloud. “Hahaha! The students have been getting greedy recently; this means they have the confidence to develop the new model? Isn’t that great? Graduates from Laihiala are great talents, and they are the ones who made the new models. We welcome such capable young ones.” Molten wasn’t just being polite. He predicted that the development and implementation of the new models would require a lot of talents, the more the merrier. It is a joy when both parties are after the same goal. “But it is not certain how much of the credit belongs to them.” But, Knut was thinking about another matter. His gaze fell on a series of words on the report— ‘Propose by: Ernesti Echevarria’. The image of the silver haired boy flashed across his mind. “Molten, interview the students about the new models.” “Yes! What are your plans, my lord?” “I, well... there is someone I have to meet personally.” For Knut, who was shouldering heavy responsibility within the nation, his words had a hint of bashfulness. Molten bowed and went about issuing orders. Knut stared at the door Molten went out from and sighed softly. He received the report from Marquis Serrati, and knew the new model wasn’t developed by the students alone. ... Did I underestimate him back then? But... Knut banished the regret welling in his heart. This feeling was because of his carelessness back then, when the King promised to disclose the manufacturing method of ether reactors in exchange for ‘designing a Silhouette Knight’. For Knut, the problem was the playful attitude of the King. The person he made the promise with— Eru was someone Knut had to look out for, but it wasn’t very much. That child has talent beyond his years, but no matter how brilliant he was, there was a limit. The King only stated the terms, but didn’t guarantee the provision of support. Furthermore, Silhouette Knight designing wasn’t something a mere student could handle. Fremmevira’s current Silhouette Knight, the Karrdator was designed a hundred years ago. After accumulating long years of technological enhancement and mobilising the best craftsmen of that era, they finally finished this masterpiece. The Karrdator predecessor ‘Salodrea’ was in service for almost two hundred years. Just from this numbers, it was clear how difficult it was to develop new machines. Knut experienced this himself, so he didn’t even consider the possibility of that promise bearing fruit. That’s how it should be... Less than a year after that incident, an unbelievable report reached his ears— ‘A student made a new Silhouette Knight model.’ Such a report was unheard of, and Knut almost fainted when he saw the name of the proposer. Ernesti Echevarria— the promise Eru made with the King was starting to become feasible, and Knut felt his common sense crumbling away. When Knut was young, he had experience in an attempt to ‘improve Karrdator’. The combat prowess of the Silhouette Knights was linked to the stability and strength of the kingdom. As the master of the highest nobility, Dixgard Dukedom, he wished for the advancement of the nation, and put this hope in the Silhouette Knights. With the permission of the King, he worked together with the NTR Lab, but the grand project didn’t yield any satisfactory results. The technology accumulated for the past century was tough to match, and the

improvement was limited without any major breakthrough and didn't meet his expectations at all. With these unpleasant memories and experiences, he realised how hard it was to create a new Silhouette Knight. Without years of accumulated technology, top notch experts or even funding, it's preposterous to imagine a bunch of students constructing a new model. In that case—Knut changed his reasoning. The boy named Ernesti should have a certain 'something'. The 'something' from an unknown source that made an impossible task of developing new models possible. It would definitely bring much benefit to Knut and the Fremmevira Kingdom. After rationalising to this point, Knut finally realised how unreliable his judgement in the past was and felt a chill run down his back. If Marquis Serrati hadn't obtained information about Eru and took action, Knut would only hear the report afterwards. He felt grateful towards Marquis Serrati for the warning, and used this chance to make his move. There was some unforeseen incident, but the new models displayed exceptional combat ability, and was highly evaluated by the Knights. Knut was sure the nationwide implementation of the model was inevitable. To achieve this, Knut needed to know what this boy Ernesti was scheming, and what were his plans. For Knut, Eru was a squirming shadow he didn't understand. Knut would definitely not hand over the future of his beloved country to such a person. Knut, who unconsciously closed his eyes in deep thought heard a gentle sound of knocking on the door. It was time to achieve his goal. He took a deep breath to calm himself, and invited the guest to enter the room. Several figures walked along the corridors of Fort Casadesus. Leading the way was a soldier in armour, who was followed by a rather short child. The light of the lantern flickered in the soldier's hands, casting shadows on the silent corridor. The clanking of the armour and the sound of footsteps created a soft melody. At the end of the corridor, a sturdy door appeared in the faint light of the lantern. The carefully designed door had a different atmosphere from its surroundings. The door Labeled 'Top Level War Room' showed how special this room was. The soldier leading the way knocked on the door and opened it carefully, leading the boy, Ernesti, into the room. Eru went through the door and noticed that the grand decoration of the room was vastly different from the rugged air of the fortress. As if to confirm the texture of the soft carpet, unsuitable for iron boots, the soldier walked slowly to the middle of the room. There was a table there. A middle aged man—the master of the fortress, Knut Dixgard was waiting there. He politely offered Eru a seat, and Eru deftly sat down after a simple greeting. The servant who appeared at the same time moved away after pouring them a drink. The high class tea imported from the west tickled the noses of these two. Their conversation thus began harmoniously with a cup of red tea in hand. To Knut, the conversation was a battle. He needed to judge Eru's character, motives, and then grab the initiative. The two of them should be gauging the distance carefully with each other on the surface while fighting intensely underneath. But, Knut was confused. "... And so, the craftsmen from the pilot faculty developed the strand crystal tissue with tremendous effort, improving the power output of the new model by one and a half times..." Eru, who was sitting opposite him was explaining endlessly. That was the case, since Knut probed with a few question about the new model, turning into Eru's personal stage. And, he prepared a lot of presentation materials as if he was planning for this. "Please refer to the material here. As mentioned previously, the new model's main advantage is in its greater power output and variety of equipment, but there is a minor issue in endurance..." But, Knut also wanted to learn more about the contents, so it was harder for him to handle. Even when Knut wanted to regain the initiative in the discussion,

his ears were still listening to Eru's voice, his eyes stared at the documents and his mind was busy organising the information about the new model. Even though a corner of his mind was sounding out in alarm, Knut continued to greedily absorb the information he sought. "As for the costs involved, I can't give you a precise number at this stage. It might change with the optimisation of production in the future. But, the expensive core parts of the Silhouette Knight would remain the same, and the changes would mainly affect the inexpensive parts, so, we predict that the price would not escalate too much..." Eru's presentation carried on. Ever since he was summoned to Fort Casadesus, Eru has been preparing the content of his presentation, and his explanation was near perfect. In the end, Eru kept talking for three hours. No matter how good someone was, the motivation to talk continuously like this has to be his passion for robots. In contrast to Eru, who was sipping the cold red tea in satisfaction, Knut was busy tidying the contents in his mind, analysing the mass production plan. When he wanted to ask some follow up questions, Knut finally remembered his original plan. Knut was stunned; he didn't think he would be unable to use his negotiation skill, which was honed in his duties as a Duke. Eru hit Knut's weakness, which was his strong interest in the new model. If that was Eru's plan all along, then Knut had completely lost. But, that powerful card was temporarily ineffective because the explanation was over, now was the time to counterattack—Knut also didn't understand why he was frustrated as he showed his ace in the hole. "I understand now, I have several questions about the new models... But Ernesti, before that, regarding what you want to do with these machines..." Knut didn't take this seat for no reason. The air about him changed, it was like a sharp blade being unsheathed. "I have permission from His Majesty to take total control over the new model project." The highest ranked Duke was tasked by the King himself, meaning he has the highest authority, only second to the King. At least in regards to this case, his words were as good as the King's. "I will take charge of everything related to the new model; the information will be relayed to His Majesty through me." This was Knut's ace, and his last hand. 'Taking total control of the opponent' had a huge effect on the other party, and had the advantage of easily earning their ire. For Knut, who couldn't make an enemy out of Eru, this wasn't the best choice. But, Knut felt it was dangerous to be led on like this. And, he had only listened to Eru's explanation and nothing more. Eru would definitely react strongly to this move, and that would be the best chance for Knut. The bigger the reaction, the easier it was for Knut to direct the flow of the conversation, and he could make full use of his skills, then. Knut suppressed his cluttered thoughts and squinted slightly. But, his opponent's answer was not what he had expected. "That's great; I won't need to repeat this to His Majesty again. If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to ask." Eru nodded his head and bowed smoothly. Knut succeeded in pressing down the groan which was some sort of miracle. The ace that was all powerful, no matter who the opponent was, didn't have any effect and was dismissed. Knut didn't expect Eru to act like he was saved the hassle. While he was dumbfounded, Eru gained control of the discussion again. "If you have full authority over this, sir, I would like to confirm something." "... Eh, what is it?" "I remember requesting something for the students in the pilot faculty when I submitted the report..." Hearing this, Knut coughed softly and regained his composure. "Yes, I heard about that. I can't guarantee they would be hired as the developers of the new models, but once we move officially into production phase, the more people we have, the better it would be. Or rather, I would push for them to take the job even if they don't want to." Eru

smiled and sighed softly. That was expected, he had accomplished most of his objectives anyway. But, Knut still felt puzzled about the intentions behind Eru's words. "I am here to explain the new models and to confirm that the senpai would be employed." Eru answered frankly. Knut wondered why he thought something wasn't right. He pondered for a while and found the reason. "... What are your plans? Promoting the new model, marketing the students, there is no problem with this. But, I haven't heard the most important part, which is your plans, and you already seemed satisfied. You are the proposer of the new model right? Based on this merit, there should be something you would want to say." In the end, Knut still knew nothing about Eru, or heard any request made by Eru. Maybe it was due to fatigue; Knut didn't beat around the bush and asked directly. "Me? Nothing yet. I am still a middle school student, so I will stay in the academy until I graduate." Oh right, he was still a twelve year old child. Knut almost agreed with him, but realised quickly that wasn't the issue here. "Wha... You stirred this matter to this point and you still want to go back to school!?" Knut forgot he was talking to a kid and was in chaos. "That might be so... but let's say I go to the NTR Lab, I would be dropping out of school and making my parents sad." Eru didn't abandon the logic of his previous life in some strange areas, but bringing this up this late into the game made Knut 'crumble'. "... You, do you know what you did?" "I only made some suggestions for a new Silhouette Knight right?" "Don't make it sound so simple! You are acting like this is natural, so it's useless to explain, but I want to say it anyway! Listen, since the founding of this Kingdom, no, in all the history of mankind, there has never been anyone who proposed a redesign of Silhouette Knights alone!!" Why did he have to explain this common sense? Knut felt an emptiness he had never experienced before in his life. If he didn't have the experience of living as a noble for so long, he would have found someone to complain about this to. "And, obviously, developing Silhouette Knights is a grand project that involves many people! Even if there is a group who comes up with a new design for Silhouette Knights, it was impossible to do so alone!!" Knut was getting really agitated; he even frightened Eru a little. "His Majesty setting this term in exchange for the ether reactor... is as good as telling you it was impossible. But, you did something so ridiculous like it was nothing, why are you acting like a kid after all that!!" In reality, Eru was really just a child, so Knut was mistaken, but it's a pity no one was present to retort him. When Knut thought a mere twelve year old 'stirred up trouble' and shook the entire nation, Knut's mind snapped. He probably didn't think about that because of his self defense mechanism. But, Eru fanned the flame mercilessly. "No, I don't plan to present Tellestarle. I have something else for His Majesty." "... There is more? What else do you want to make?" The composure he had in the beginning was gone without a trace, veins appeared on Knut's temples. Eru displayed his most brilliant smile of the day and said: "Yes, of course. Because making Silhouette Knights is my 'hobby'." The agitation just now seemed to be an illusion as Knut turned ominously silent. A similar scene flashed across his mind— 'because it's my hobby'. It's true, Knut finally understood that what Eru said to the King were the sincere words from his heart. He then realised this person will definitely be a genius that will leave his mark in history and be unmatched in his field of expertise. But, at the same time, Eru was like a bad omen, who would charge head ahead without regarding how much trouble it would cause others. No wonder he hit it off with the King. The calm portion of his mind confirmed something ominous. The young Ambrosius was a capable and reckless genius, taking joy in setting up others. Back then, the Duke had to go along with him and suffered

much. Right now, Ambrosius was a ‘wise King’— wrong, His Majesty still couldn’t suppress his playful mentality— but he was like a catastrophe back in the days. Knut didn’t know, but the people in the palace called him the ‘tamer’. The boy before him was the same type of person as the King, he finally acknowledged this point. He didn’t expect to uncover Eru’s ‘way of thinking’ like this. He collapsed in his chair with a ‘thump’. “... I see.” The conversation ended with these heavy words. Molten mentioned after this incident that the two of them conversed for a long time, but Knut was obviously tired for some other reason. About a week after Eru and Knut’s verbal battle, the scene returned to Marquis Serrati’s residence inside the Imperial Capital Känkänen. “According to the information I recieved, they had this conversation.” Joachim Serrati reviewed the document he had already read several times. The summary of Eru and Knut’s discussion was sent to him immediately afterwards. After he stoically finished his explanation, the children were speechless. They didn’t know where to place their raised fist and their mouths were tightly shut under an awkward expression. If one were to describe how they were feeling right now, it would be ‘Ah, that’s right, Eru is such a person.’ Tiffa squeezed out the last ounce of her strong will to recover her composure. “... Yes, that’s right. Anyway... it’s fine if he is happy.” She sounded a bit unhappy, but that was understandable. At this moment, the shaky Chid suddenly lifted his head. He understood Eru stirred up some trouble after hearing Joachim’s explanation, but there was still an unsolved mystery. “Then, why is Eru not back?” “I don’t understand either. There are people who returned from Fort Casadesus, did you ask them?” “... Ah... We came here without asking...” They were too agitated, and forgot the Boss and the others, who were an important source of information. The three of them became dejected. “Ara, to get so worked up, this boy, Ernesti, must be very precious to all of you..” The three of them lost the imposing air they had when they entered the room. Joachim didn’t lecture them and said calmly to the twins: “Archid, Adeltrud, stay by his side in the future, too.” “Yes, yes! Ah, huh?” The two of them thought they would be lectured, and were surprised after hearing that. “Duke Dixgard thinks he would be safe for now, I feel the same way, too. His actions in the future will affect the Kingdom... No, it would have even vaster consequences. He will have many comrades, but also a lot of enemies. No matter how capable he is, it would be hard to make it through the turmoils by himself. You are close to him and had been learning from him, right? Continue to support him from now on, too.” Chid and Ady listened with a surprised expression, and then clenched their fists tightly, saying firmly to their father: “Of course!” “That’s right! It’s obvious that I will be together with Eru!” The twins who steeled their resolve once again nodded and Tiffa hugged them from behind. Watching this scene, Joachim glanced at the part of the report he didn’t tell the children. The Duke said he has the naivety of a child and the logical mindset of an adult. It would be a good move to have playmates from childhood around him. I hope he doesn’t immerse himself in the pursuit of power, and continues to work hard for the country. Joachim looked at his children with unexpectedly gentle eyes, but the children who were hugging each other did not notice. “... Setting this aside for now.” Joachim changed his tone, reverting back to his strong attitude. The three of them stiffened. “The three of you skipped school and came here? It seems like we need to have a proper talk.” The smiles on the children became bitter, it couldn’t be helped— A huge lightning struck at the very end of the storm. Duke Dixgard was troubled— and the reason was standing before him, smiling with a huge pile of notes in his arms. “You really... plan to make

that?” “Yes. I have confidence that this is worthy of teaching me the manufacturing method of ether reactors.” Eru’s cheerfully replied to the words Knut squeezed out. Lucky I had a look before it was presented to the King— Knut wanted to praise himself. The document Eru showed to him had the Silhouette Knight and the draft design that was planned to be shown to the King. This ‘thing’ that threw out all sorts of common sense could still be submitted to His Majesty, but not directly like this. Knut sighed deeply and realised he needed to keep this ridiculous existence, named Ernesti, in check. “Pardon my intrusion!!” Knut’s thoughts were interrupted by a third party. Without waiting for a reply, the commander of the Red Rabbit, Molten, barged straight in. Even a Commander of the Knights would be faulted if he interrupted the conversation of a Duke with his guest. But, Knut could tell it was an emergency from Molten’s demanour. “What happened?” “Smoke signals from the direction of ‘Dallier Village’ has been spotted... the smoke is ‘red’, probably a group of Demon beasts above duel level.” Demon beast above duel level, and an entire group; this meant ‘death’ for villages with limited defenses. Knut decided immediately— “Molten, you had already ordered the pilots to sortie, right? Sent at least a squad, and head at full speed for ‘Dallier Village’, we must protect the village!!” “Yes, my lord! We are making preparations. Once the team is ready, I will send the Red Rabbit Knights to attack!!” Molten bowed and charged out with the same speed he entered. “There is no time to chat, I will command from the fort. You... I can’t just leave you here, come along with me.” Eru nodded and exited the room, following behind Knut.

Knights & Magic - Volume 2 - Chapter 15

Under the clear blue skies, two figures were dragging their feet as they walked through the Laihiala Academy campus. It was the twins, Chid and Ady. The two of them, who were lectured along with their elder sister by their father, were also warned by the teachers after returning to school. Battered all over, the two of them walked gloomily along the corridor of the campus renowned for its size. They were out on a walk to change their mood, but they had a strong urge to give up on everything and just lie down on the ground. They were pushed forward by the need to ‘check on Eru’s situation’. Squeezing out their last ounce of strength, the two made it to the pilot faculty’s workshop, and rushed at the Boss when they saw him. “The silver boy? He should be educating the Duke... Cough, cough, explaining to the Duke right now.” “... Eeeerrrruuu...” The Boss looked at the exhausted twins, who collapsed onto the floor with a mix of sympathy and pity. The two of them realised that if they had asked the Boss from the start, they wouldn’t have blown the matter up, so they were laughing dryly, too. “And, so, the boy won’t be back so soon. Ara, what a rare sight. The Duke even cried...” The Boss said as he stroked his beard, and the twins just muttered an acknowledgement on the ground. The Boss didn’t really mind and simply nodded. He then started explaining the things decided at Casadesus. The Boss thought of the twins as people related to the development of the new model, and he felt the obligation to inform them accordingly. “Just sit there; it’s fine. The new model is under the charge of the Duke now. This means the development project would be directed by the Duke. Depending on their progress, the craftsmen here might be sent to the NTR Lab, or some factory to manufacture the new model.” The tired Chid lifted his head in surprise. “Are you going to leave, Boss?” Chid couldn’t conceal the loneliness in his voice. For Chid and Ady, the senpais in the pilot faculty weren’t playmates like their friends in class, but comrades on the same team, an existence similar to older brothers. When the twins heard they were going to leave, it hurt them a little. “I was going to graduate next year, anyway, so don’t show such an expression.” The Boss poked Chid’s forehead, wanting to dismiss the gloomy air. But, the power of a dwarf’s fist was so powerful that it made Chid fall over. As Ady pulled away, the Boss cleared his throat and went back to the topic. “Ah — there’s one more thing. The reason why the boy has yet to return... is probably due to them squabbling over how to handle him.” “Handle... Eru?” “Yup. The boy said he wanted to stay in the academy until graduation, but, honestly speaking, the circumstance doesn’t allow this. We also did our best to develop the new model, but the ‘essence’ of the boy was different from us. It’s impossible for him to keep the status quo and continue schooling.” The twins spent a bit of time understanding what the Boss said. They just heard the Boss was leaving, and adding in this dire news made the faces of the twins turn green. “Eh... Nee, nee, Boss, do you mean, Eru will go to the NTR Lab, too?” “Eru... Will leave!?” This was a possibility they had never considered. With the introduction of the new machines, there was no telling if they could become a Knight. But, they had

always assumed that they would be together with Eru until they graduated. This wasn't a one sided wish, the three of them were classmates with the same ambition, after all. But there had been a drastic change to the situation, stopping this path they had always taken for granted. The shocking content made the twins hang their heads in silence. The Boss wanted to call out to them, and at this moment— Chid lifted his head, his body emitting a steel resolve. "I have decided. I will find Eru immediately." Chid's soft words stunned the Boss and Ady, who turned towards him. "Damn it, how long do you think it would take? It's not so simple that you can go, if you want to! And, the boy will be back sooner or later, there is no rush..." "I don't care! I want to find him now!! And, ask him face to face!! I won't allow him to stay there by himself!!" Chid who was usually lazy became full of anger, showing the others his determination. "Calm down, how will you get to somewhere so far away?" "Silhouette gear! With that, we could move faster than a horse!!" Ady raised her fist as well, making the Boss hold his head with a headache. He knew the twins were the pupils of Eru, so they could actually do it, if they wanted to. But the trip to Casadesus was easier said than done. Domestic travel with the Kingdom of Fremmevira was paved with danger. Only those with experience and adequate preparation could survive the trip. No matter how good the twins were, they were definitely underestimating the dangers. The Boss was doing all that he could to stop their recklessness. But, the one who stopped the agitated twins was a calm voice that came from behind. "And, of course, we won't let you do that." Edgar grabbed the twins by their arms, restraining them. "Edgar-senpai!? Unhand me!" "No. Both of you listen up, the journey to Casadesus is dangerous! Even with Silhouette gears and your skills, I won't permit you to go. I understand... how you feel, but we can only wait for now." The twins were still calm enough to not draw their staves. Edgar was grabbing their arms; mere children wouldn't be able to break free without using physical boost. It became a match of tug of war. Helvi and Dietrich who walked towards them from behind watched them with a troubled expression. "... Oh right, Di, that thing isn't repaired yet, right?" An awkward atmosphere was hanging over the workshop because of the intense debate, when these untimely words were uttered. Under the gaze of everyone present, the Boss smiled mischievously, and gestured behind him with his chin. Everyone was baffled by the sudden change in topic, but they still looked in the direction indicated. Before them, a machine that was being repaired was seated on the Silhouette Knight repair platform at the end of the room. It was customised with strand crystal tissue with the primary armour, the outer skin had not been installed yet. One man reacted strongly to the armour that was painted red. "It's Guyale! I remember it was only half finished when you all set off for Casadesus. Ara, it is almost complete... Nee, Boss, isn't the construction of the new model under the purview of the Duke and had been stopped? What are you planning?" Guyale's pilot, Dietrich, turned from joy to troubled, an expressive face. "Well, we won't be building new ones, but it would be a shame to stop those that were half done. So, we will finish this one." Dietrich asked gleefully, while the Boss nodded his head while explaining. The others ignored the two who were chatting harmoniously and was puzzled. "The new models are under the charge of the Duke, so we can't just leave this one here in Laihiala. We can't trouble the Duke over such a small matter, so we have to deliver it over, right?" The smile on Dietrich's face froze, while Edgar and Helvi, who were starting to understand what the Boss was saying had a complicated expression. "It's not safe for Guyale to travel alone, Edgar, bring your Earlecumber along. We will follow in carriages, so we can make repairs

if needed on the way there. And, we might have extra passengers on the way back.” Understanding what he was trying to say, Chid and Ady stared at the Boss with wide eyes. The face of the Boss covered under his beard had a wide grin. “Hey, Boss, even if you want to help them, you shouldn’t spoil them like this.” “Oh—? I am not doing this for them, it just so happen that I have ‘some business there’. But, things might not go so smoothly.” Edgar who heard this couldn’t help but shrug. The Boss was definitely going out of his way for the twins. But, Edgar could only hold back a wry smile. “Hee— I didn’t think you would be so nice to kids, Boss.” “Hmmp, those who have wielded a hammer with me are my brothers, a Dwarf would never ignore a brother in trouble... The boy is their friend, right? There’s no better time to help them.” The Boss puffed his chest out righteously, and the others could only give a bitter smile. Edgar wanted to stop the twins, but he understood how it was to part with friends, and wanted to aid them too. These actions were very ‘intentional’, but Edgar understood the importance of keeping up appearance and let go of the twins’ hands. The two children happily bumped their fist against the Boss. This scene warmed the hearts of the maintenance department, who were watching them bicker. They rolled up their sleeves and started moving purposefully. “The outer skin is about eighty percent complete! Just a bit more!” “We can use the spare parts for the delicate areas. Get the crane over here, install this quickly!” The warm atmosphere a second ago was gone. The workshop regained its vigour of fire and iron, operating as usual. With the noise of rollers as the background, it overlapped with the noise of the crisp sounds of metal being hammered. After their experience in the recent days, the skills of the maintenance crew had grown even more. Under their skillful hands, the red Silhouette Knight became closer to completion. “... Sob, are we taking Guyale away? It is finally repaired... Should I ask Casadesus to hire me directly?” “Di, well... Cheer up.” In the hot and steamy workshop, Dietrich was the only one watching the red machine being finished in sadness. The Red Rabbit Knights saw the smoke signals and were dispatched to its source, Dallier village. The squad comprised of nine Karrdator and one command Karrdialia. As the distance was relatively near, the Silhouette Knights travelled at a pace faster than normal. All villages in the kingdom of Fremmevira have walls that could repel Demon beasts. But normally, villages won’t be able to erect walls that surround itself completely. Instead, they would focus on the village centre, building reinforced walls there and erecting a mini stronghold with supplies to tide over the danger. When they were attacked by Demon beast that couldn’t be defeated by humans, the villagers would seek refuge there, raise the smoke signal and waiting for the Knights stationed nearby to help them. The stronghold was small, but as the last line of defence for the lives of the villagers, it was built to be very sturdy. But, the smoke signal was red this time, meaning duel level Demon beasts were attacking. Facing monsters that could match up against the strongest weapon of humanity, the Silhouette Knights, the fortress couldn’t hold on indefinitely. The Knights suppressed their anxiety as they rushed to the Dallier village. There was quite a number of duel level Demon beasts in the nation, so, such attacks were common. But, when the Red Rabbit Knights reached Dallier village, the Demon beast weren’t just one or two— there were more than a dozen duel level Demon beast around the village, with numerous mid-level beasts congregating there. The entire village had been morphed into the playground of the Demon beasts. The scene before them made the cavalry scouts shiver in disbelief. They could see armoured bear, blunt dragon, flaming tiger and all sorts of Demon beasts. Each of these Demon beasts lived in the area around

here, but they all have their own territory and wouldn't act in concert. It was unfathomable for them to be gathered here like this. All of them were in an aggressive state; there were even some fighting among themselves. The scouts advanced cautiously, and found something that shouldn't be happening. Reflected in their eyes was the ruins of the sturdy walls that was supposed to protect the villagers. An armoured bear was sticking its head into the stronghold, savouring 'something'. The squad leader piloting the Karrdialia issued his order without hesitation, once he received the report from the scouts. "All units, charge into the village centre at full speed. Wedge shaped formation; take down all the Demon beasts in our way. Protect the stronghold at all cost!!" Charging into the centre of the Demon beast encirclement was suicidal, but there was no voice of opposition coming from the pilots and they acknowledged firmly instead. The squad adopted the wedge formation with amazing speed, kept their shields and equipped their Silhouette arms and swords. They were prioritising their offence over their defence. With the command from the squad commander, the group began their assault. The sprinting giants were as loud as thunder, drawing the attention of the Demon beasts. The Karrdators' Silhouette arms 'Culverin' glowed brightly from the charging Overed spell and blasted at the Demon beasts mercilessly. The Karrdators seemed to be chasing their own magic shots as they ran, forging the shortest path to the centre of the village with brute force. Although the Demon beasts had the advantage in numbers, they were scattered all over the place. The squad repelled the Demon beasts with their tight formation, making it to the stronghold in one push. The sound of explosions finally grabbed the attention of the armoured bear that was sticking its head into the stronghold. Lifting its head slowly, the beast growled unhappily for being disturbed in the middle of its meal, turned its head back— and lost its chance to put up a fight. A roar of thunder came at it as the entire squad fired a barrage from their culverin, before rushing at it en masse. "Die! Bastard!!"



The vanguard of the wedge formation did not slow down, moving forth with the momentum of the Karrdialia and struck with its spear. Although the armoured bear had hardened skin, it couldn't guard against the rampage of the Karrdialia. The strike hit the armoured bear in the head, piercing the skin and smashing its insides, killing the armoured bear instantly. The Karrdialia did not slow down and crashed into the carcass of the armoured bear. In order to protect the squad commander, who took care of the Demon beast splendidly, the other Karrdators changed their formation immediately, arranging themselves in a semi-circle outside the hole. They had an aura which screamed 'You shall not pass!'. The other Demon beast became more ferocious when they smelt the scent of the armoured bear's blood, and swarmed up in a frenzy. Facing the tsunami coming at them, the Karrdators stood their ground. The first wave of the attacks had reduced the Demon beasts' numbers, so, that they were about on par with the squad, but the reckless charge into the midst of the Demon beast group left them in a crisis. The assault earlier depleted most of the mana pool, limiting their means of attack. Mana was being created as the ether reactor groaned with the intake of air, but it couldn't keep up with the depletion rate the machines were using to evade the Demon beasts' vicious attacks. Blocking the fire of the flaming tigers with shields, dodging the tail whips of the blunt dragons, taking on the charge of the armoured bears. Utilising the intelligence of humans, which the Demon beasts lack, the Silhouette Knight overcame the crisis with teamwork and their skills, but were constantly in danger, just like walking on a tight rope. "We will never retreat! Exterminate them right here!!" Breaking the stalemate was the squad commander. The high performance command Karrdialia was damaged in the assault of the armoured bear, but it still took out the Demon beast that engaged him. Before the mana of the machine was completely exhausted, it delivered the last burst of attack. The battle ended shortly after that. The Knights who gained the advantage in numbers charged into the enemy's formation and achieved victory. After taking down the last duel level Demon beast, the mid-sized Demon beasts were all repelled. All machines in the squad were damaged. Three of them were half destroyed, another two were total losses. It was a close victory, but they completed their mission. After the long battle ended and the area was secured, it was already dark. The support units on stand by outside entered and provide relief to the survivors. Bonfires were set up around the stronghold and tents were erected to tend to the wounded. It was a disaster within the stronghold; the armoured bear that broke through the walls killed half the population of Dallier village. The surviving villagers expressed their thanks to the Knights for making it in the nick of time. There were some who thought 'if only the Knights came earlier' or 'I will mourn for the neighbour who passed on'. But the most important thing was that they were still alive. Everyone congratulated each other for living on. This was the unique thought process of citizens who lived alongside 'Demon beasts'. Their cold and extremely positive attitude became the motivating force supporting them in this harsh environment. Apart from the loss of lives, the damage to the buildings was great, too. The Knights weren't just tasked with driving the Demon beasts out. In situations like this, when the Demon beasts caused large scale damages, the Knights would be stationed there temporarily, ensuring the safety of the area and assisting with restoration works. Only in emergencies, such as this will the Silhouette Knight be used as

extremely strong construction machines. It won't be used in this way normally, because the cost would outweigh the benefits. The scene of ten meter tall Karrdators repairing the houses would carry on for quite some time. As the repairs of the village began officially, two Karrdators capable of walking by themselves were dispatched to fort Casadesus to report the safety of the village and the start of restoration works. They will need to request reinforcement from the fort to retrieve the badly damaged machines. The pilots only did basic repairs to the machine and returned to base, consoling the partner whose machine short circuits every now and then. The journey was uneventful, and they reached the forest near Fort Casadesus in no time. They will reach the Fort after passing through the woods. Bearing news of victory, they advanced along the forest path while chatting casually. While the squad of Red Rabbit Knights were subjugating the Demon beasts in Dallier village, a shadow that wasn't the Knight's support units was observing from the forest. The figure was covered with a cloth that blended with the forest, hard to detect like a shadow. The shadow left the place after most of the duel level Demon beast had fallen, jumping onto a horse that was tied to a tree in the vicinity. The horse walked slowly and silently through the forest for a while before a cabin came into view. The cabin was originally the rest station for hunters working in the forest. It could be used as a refuge if they were chased by Demon beast. Made from sturdy logs, the cabin was small but durable. The shadow dismounted and rapped the door in a certain rhythm. After the sound of unlocking was heard, the door was opened. The cabin was unexpectedly crowded. Everyone was wearing dark coloured leather armour and seated around the table in the middle, discussing something. On the table was a map that detailed the terrain of the surroundings, with arrows and legends marked on it. The person that entered the cabin slowly unraveled the cloth around his body—it was the man who got the information about the new model from the student in Laihiala Academy City. "Captain, as expected, the Red Rabbit Knights defeated the Demon beasts." "I figured that would happen, those Knights exist for this very reason. How large was the dispatched forces?" "About a squad size." The woman that was addressed by the man as Captain crossed her arms after hearing the report. She pointed out her sources that told her there were roughly three squads deployed at the Fort, so there should be two squads left in Casadesus plus the new models. "Alright, withdraw the scouts. We will proceed as planned—the job we have all been waiting for." After saying that, the woman looked out of the window. There were figures that looked like the mythical giants in fairy tales, covered in canvas, vines and plants. The giants completely occupied the vast space around the cabin. The objects that were camouflaged by the items placed on them were silent, eagerly waiting the moment when they would be activated. In the workshop of Laihiala Academy's pilot faculty, the craftsmen were wielding their hammers as usual. The noise of the rollers could be heard overhead and a roar which could be heard over the entire din announced the conclusion of the final checks. A Silhouette Knight was seated on the giant chair-like repair platform. The chest armour was open, allowing easy access to the pilot cockpit. The craftsmen who were repairing the machine moved away as a student walked passed them towards the machine. Pilots—those with the skills to manoeuvre Silhouette Knights and possessed the training of a Knight, the cadet of the pilot faculty. He boarded the machine and unlocked the control stick by his legs and pulled hard. The sound of gears clicking into place and the compression of air overlapped, closing the chest armour of the machine slowly. "It's been a long time. Tellestarle wasn't bad, but I feel more at ease in here." Dietrich leaned

back in the cockpit of his repaired machine, 'Guyale', and was moved. With ninety percent damaged—a never seen before number, the Silhouette Knight was reforged with the efforts of the craftsmen. Almost everything in the cockpit was replaced, the smell of new leather tickled Dietrich's nose. "You had just been reborned, but I have to send you away. Ughh..." He had a face that 'looked good when he kept his mouth shut' which showed a bitter expression. Dietrich pushed the control stick lightly; it was the only thing that was salvaged from the destroyed cockpit. The wear and tear and familiarity troubled him. Even though it was contrary to the wishes of the Boss and the twins, it was still decided that the new models would be under the Duke's management now. He smiled wryly and shook his head, pushing his troubles behind him and opened the cap of the sound amplifier. "Guyale is standing up, please clear the area." Dietrich stepped on the pedal and operated the control sticks, and Guyale with his new outer skin followed the instructions of its master faithfully. The ether reactor came to life, the sound of the air intake revving noisily. The magius engine applied the mana from the reactor onto the scripts and the crystal tissue flexed accordingly, making the sound of tensing and moved the giant Knight. The armoured Knight trembled and after the gap of several months, the 'Crimson Knight' rose once again with heavy steps. Guyale stepped out from the edge of the workshop. Its shattered armour reforged with no sign of the damage it once had, reflecting the bright red glint under the sun. Because it was customised in the same way as the Telleslarle when it was repaired, the interior was totally new, even though it looked about the same on the outside. The back weapon had been installed on it with the Silhouette arms 'Kamast'. Learning from its lesson from its weapons breaking, there were four swords equipped on its waist, with two of them being reserves, it was heavily armed. Guyale was a machine which focused on offense with dual blades. It might not have a shield, but the armour from its shoulder to its arms was reinforced to make up for its lack of defences. Standing beside the standard model Earlecumber, Guyale looked rather bulky. "Alright, no problems from my side. Are the preparations ready?" Earlecumber, who was standing in front of the workshop raised a hand to acknowledge Dietrich. Aside from Earlecumber, there were two carriages and other familiar faces. "David, isn't this Silhouette Knight a property of the academy? Handing it over like this troubles me." "It's just for a moment, so, its fine. And, it had already been agreed that the Duke-sama would exchange each machine with a Karrdator. The number of machines in the campus would be the same." "That's not the issue... Well, forget it. The pilot faculty had been breaking the tradition all year long; it's too late to bring this up..." Dean Lauri, who had been more opened minded recently mumbled and waved his hand casually. Batson who was on a carriage said in a soft voice: "Loading of the goods is completed... Isn't this pushing it a bit too much? But, it won't fit if I don't do this." Including the ones used by Chid and Ady, the three Silhouette gears—Motor beats were secured with steel wire. Even though they were smaller than Silhouette Knights, not much space was left after squeezing in these large armours. Just three of them took up an entire carriage. "Three? We are bringing Eru's machine along?" "If we only bring ours, he will definitely throw a tantrum..." Chid and Ady nodded at each other. The Boss completed loading the other carriage and called out. "Alright, let's make a trip to Casadesus. Move out!" "Understood—! See you, Batson! We will bring Eru back!" "Yeah— it's a rare chance, so lecture him in my place—" The carriages set off quietly under the watchful eyes of everyone. The Boss, several maintenance staff and the twins sat in the carriages with the red and white Silhouette

Knights following behind. Batson, who was left behind waved his hands for a while. Lauri changed his mood, turning his head back and said: "We need to prepare for the Karrdator that will be coming. We might need the help of your juniors, so, plan with that possibility in mind." The group acknowledged sparsely, and the craftsmen who were left returned to the workshop. Many things might have changed, but they were living their usual lives. This happened about a week ago— A man walked on the streets of Laihiala Academy City, walking ahead without reservation towards a non-descript house. The people inside the house were surprised by the visit; even the tall woman sitting at the very end was surprised. But, she composed herself in no time and smiled mockingly, squinting her eyes with a hint of a threat and said: "Ara, I wasn't expecting the envoy from the 'home country' to visit, this is a surprise." The 'envoy' wasn't fazed, standing tall before the woman and spoke in a businesslike manner. "... 'Kerhild Hietakangas', 'His Majesty' has orders for you and your 'Copper Fang Knights'." "Ara, His Majesty is so kind to address us as Knights." Ignoring Kerhild's teasing, the envoy conveyed the purpose of his visit plainly. "His Majesty is very curious about your report on the 'toy', and would like one to be sent to him. They are too extravagant for mere 'Demon beast guards', only our 'home nation' is worthy enough to have it. Obtain them by all means necessary and present it to His Majesty." The orders were within her expectations, so Kerhild simply shrugged. "We were just complaining about the mission being too boring, this came at the right time.. That's what I wanted to say, but that 'toy' is in some place called a Fort after all. And it is a bit too big to steal, you understand?" "I get it, but, like I said, 'by any means'. His Majesty knew about this... so you can use 'everything you have'." A smile that came from the bottom of her heart surfaced on Kerhild's face for the first time. To supplement the description of her smile, it was like 'a predator that got its prey alive'. "Hee... if everything is at my disposal, then, that includes the treasured 'Wendebadalla'?" "Of course, even 'cursed bait' is fine too." The answer that went beyond Kerhild's imaginations made her eyes widen before she burst into laughter. "Haha! This is interesting! Ara, the miser Majesty is being generous this time! He must really like this 'toy'." From the depths of the narrow eyes of the envoy, strong determination could be seen, but Kerhild didn't mind at all. She didn't care about others when she talked or acted. "Sigh, guess we have to do this... The men are prepared. Help me convey to the 'Dear Majesty', I will definitely deliver what he desires." "... Very good. Those Demon beast guards should be very pleased with themselves right now and let their guard down, so act with haste." After this, the envoy turned and left after completing his job. Kerhild who watched the envoy leave couldn't help smiling as she said to the others. "How cold, just like usual. Never mind, men! After being chased to this hell hole of a country, we are finally in luck!" "That's right; it's our win if we complete this mission!" The men around her were all in high spirits. The smile on Kerhild's face darkens. "Alright, let's bring the 'toy' the Demon beast guards are so proud of as a gift." And, so, the 'Copper Fang Knights' began their operation in this country silently. One week later, 'Acquart Forest' near Fort Casadesus. In the dense Acquart Forest, it was dim even in the middle of the day and the air was heavy and still. The path through the forest was illuminated by sunlight, making the surroundings brighter. But, outside the range of the sunlight, a group of people were squirming in the depths of the vegetation. They were wearing dark coloured armour that didn't draw much attention, prone and keeping still, waiting for the right moment. Aside from the occasional chirping of the birds, it was absolutely silent. After an unknown

period of time had passed, a shadow meandered through the forest. Wearing dark coloured armour similar to his comrades, he reported. "Captain, message from 'reindeer': 'The hunter had put down the prey'." After hearing the quiet report from her subordinate, the Copper Fang Knight Commander, Kerhild Hietakangas, instructed softly: "Alright boys, are you ready? Activate 'Wendebadalla'." The subordinate nodded and disappeared into the depths of the forest without much noise. This group was known as the Copper Fang Knights, but normal 'Knights' won't be able to conceal themselves and hide in the darkness to execute their plans. Calling them a 'band of Knights' was almost a mockery—they were an existence known as 'spies'. For them to act in a group, it meant that their goal wasn't simple. The birds resting on the trees became agitated, chirped and flew away. At the same time, A giant object that was camouflaged behind them was preparing to stand up slowly. That object which was about five times the size of a human showed its true form. It was a humanoid machine made from steel and crystal tissue— Silhouette Knights. The Silhouette Knight known as 'Wendebadalla' to Kerhild and the others had many strange features: A smooth exterior, partial armour, visible Demon beast leather, two holes on its oval head for vision, with its lifeless eye crystal swaying inside. The skinny appearance felt unpleasant. Most incredible of all, 'Wendebadalla' did not make any churning noise unique to Silhouette Knights. The sound of the air intake was soft and vague, blending into the noise of the forest. Somehow, the crystal tissue that should be emitting a shrill string-like instrument noises were almost silent, and its footfall was non-existent compared to other machines. The faceless giant with a thin presence was like a spirit in the dim forest. Kerhild watched its blurry figure and smiled deviously. "You are the trump card we worked so hard to smuggle in, so show us what you are made of. Okay, get ready for battle. There is only one chance, so don't screw this up. Give it your best shot!" She waved her hand and the three Wendebadallas started advancing in silence. The squirming spirits headed towards the main road of the forest, where the two Karrdators would definitely pass through. They were waiting for the Red Rabbit Knights who were bringing news from Dallier Village. When the spirits detected the Knights, they went forth like a shadow, approaching them from behind quietly. The pilots of the Karrdator weren't careless. It might have looked like they were strolling casually, but, they were watching their surrounding carefully, looking for Demon beast that might pop out. But, their focus was on the sound. The more threatening the Demon beast, the bigger the disturbance, so they had been trained to ignore the unnatural sound emitted from their machine. That was why the Knights didn't notice the spirits sneaking up on them, concealed by the noise of their machines churning. Sneaking behind the Karrdator without a sound, the Wendebadalla closed in speedily. In their hands was a thrusting weapon stiletto. Sacrificing combat prowess for speed and stealth, the Wendebadalla had below average power, light armour and lacked endurance. In a straight up fight, it would take three Wendebadalla to match up against one Karrdator. It's a pure assassin type. The stiletto was aimed at the flank of the machine. The arm joint of the Silhouette Knight was thin; it was at best covered by chain armour or Demon beast leather. In order to draw in air into the reactor, intake valves were usually situated above the abdomen, and the chest cavity had the most fragile part of the Silhouette Knight — the pilot. That was the biggest weakness of the Silhouette Knight. The Wendebadallas hugged the Karrdators from behind, stabbing the blade into the flank. The weapon specialised for thrusting attacks pierced the thin armour easily, hitting the pilots inside. Before the pilots of the Karrdator could react, the

blade of the giant took his life. The Karrdator didn't move, stopping like a puppet that lost its strings. A Silhouette Knight that lost its pilot won't go out of control like living beings. Seeing both Karrdator stop, Kerhild laughed softly. "Alright, things are progressing smoothly. Let's make the next move, get ready!" After the Wendebadalla slowly laid the Karrdator onto the ground, the soldiers came out from the woods. The Stiletto could take out the pilot in one hit in most cases, and had the advantage of damaging just the armour, intake valve and the pilots. This meant it wouldn't affect the operation of the Silhouette Knights much. If someone else controlled it, the Karrdator could be moved once again. They 'cleaned up' the pilots of the Karrdator, and sat into the bloody cockpit without hesitation. And, so, the Karrdator became real spirits and slowly stood up. The ironic thing was that the Karrdator which was easy to control benefitted the assassins. The Karrdator which fell into enemy hands as though nothing had happened walked forth steadily, while the Wendebadalla blended into the darkness of the woods once again. The spirits marched step by step towards Fort Casadesus.

Knights & Magic - Volume 2 - Chapter 16

The warm sun set behind Mount Aubigne and the scenery was enveloped in darkness with the chill of the autumn breeze. The wind made the guards on duty at Fort Casadesus shiver. His companions who had left to light up the torches everywhere had returned to the observation post. "Sigh, guard duties are going to get even more tiring in the coming season." "You are right, I want to change shift and rest soon..." The two talking with each other heard the heavy footfalls of a large presence approaching and looked tense. They observed the situation on the road from above the city gate. In the dim light before the city fell completely into darkness, they identified the giant Knight wearing green armour. "Oh, that's a Karrdator? The squad sent to Dallier Village?" "Hold on, let me confirm... Yes, that's our crest." Seeing the crest of the Red Rabbit Knights on the shoulders of the approaching Karrdator, a weird noise could be heard. It might be some damaged parts jamming, the Karrdator made clanking sounds every time it moved. The damage seemed rather severe. The guards saluted them and asked: "Thank you for your hard work. How's the situation at Dallier Village?" "The village is badly damaged, but we took care of the Demon beasts." The pilot in the Karrdator said that they were piloting the badly damaged machine in the Dallier Village expedition, and were sent back to bring news of their victory. Acknowledging the report, the guards opened the gates. The Karrdator on duty manipulated the control of the gate, and the entrance to the fort opened slowly with the grinding of wood against wood. The two returning Karrdator and the carriage following behind entered, showered by the praise and greetings of the guards. If you come home victorious, even wounds would be a glorious medal. No wonder the guards were so excited. "The damage is terrible, park the machine in the workshop before reporting in." "Okay... I was planning to do that." After saluting stiffly at the Karrdator stationed at the gate, the two damaged Karrdators moved slowly towards the workshop. There was a carriage following behind, but the guards assumed it was just carrying supplies, so, no one paid it any heed. Seeing the damaged machines enter the workshop, the craftsmen working on the other machines gathered in a hurry. As a precaution, the other machines had already been inspected, ready to be deployed. The Knights received orders to stand by, too and were gathered at the guard room near the workshop. The leading craftsmen barked out orders when he saw the Karrdator making weird noises and moving stiffly, and the maintenance team brought in spare parts in a hurry. The two Karrdators walked slowly towards the repair platform where the other machines were placed. That was normal, but the carriage was following them into the workshop, too, was puzzling. All the pilots were in the guard room, were the craftsmen accompanying the squad inside? But, with the operation still going on, they wouldn't sent people back needlessly. When a craftsman thought about that and was about to question them about the carriage, something flew out from it. Several arrows flew through the air with a dull sound, hitting the craftsman right in the chest. As he fell to the ground puking blood, a few armed members burst out of the

carriage at the same time. While, the Karrdators walking towards the repair platform revealed their true colours, pulling out their swords swiftly, their stiff actions moments ago was a ruse. They swung their blades at the entrance to the workshop, shattering the structure and blocking the way with debris. Cutting off reinforcements, the intruders fired their crossbows and wielded their swords, disposing of the remaining repair personnel in the workshop. The last person to dismount from the carriage was the Captain of the Copper Fang Knights— Kerhild. “You lot guard the front! How long do you need to deal with mere craftsmen!? Hurry up and steal that thing!” The Copper Fang Knights occupied the workshop in the blink of an eye, blocking the entrance to the workshop with the stolen Karrdator as they searched the workshop. Moments later, a member shouted for Kerhild’s attention. Looking over, Kerhild saw a plain colored machine that was different from the Karrdator. Seeing the new model that looked out of place, Kerhild was confident the plan was going to work. “Yeah, that’s it... Just as I thought. Alright boys, prepare to pack it up...!” The Copper Fang Knights were just spies after all. Individual combat prowess aside, there weren’t many skilled pilots among them. Due to the necessity of the raid, everyone gathered here had piloting skills. As Kerhild activated the target ‘toy’, the others boarded the Karrdator on scene. They could only take three Karrdator, the rest of the Karrdator couldn’t be activated. “The extras might get in the way, get rid of them. The guards are coming soon, no time to drag on, move!” Following her instructions, the Karrdator cut down the other machines seated on the repair platform. The unmanned machines were easily destroyed and reduced to scraps. The Red Rabbit Knights noticed something was wrong in the workshop. The Karrdator in charge of manning the gates rushed to the workshop because of the commotion, and was pounced on by another Karrdator. “Damn it! What are these guys doing? They are stealing our Karrdator!!” The Red Rabbit Knights couldn’t get ahold of the situation, they only knew the intruders had captured some of the Karrdators and occupied the workshop. Even though they lacked information, they still retaliated ferociously. That was natural, as the enemy stole their Karrdators and messed up their home base, how could they stay calm? They forgot about their confusion and attacked fiercely. But the high spirited Red Rabbit Knights fell into a panic once again when they saw the familiar machines behind the Karrdator. “That... could it be...!!” Their appearance weren’t standardise, a sign of a rushed job. The back weapons that the other machines had, gave off an intimidating aura. The new prototype Silhouette Knight ‘Tellestarle’ advanced with strong steps threatening to smash the floor of the workshop. All five machines sent by Laihiala Pilot Academy had fallen into the hands of the Copper Fang Knights. “What power... it’s more amazing than they said, like an untamed horse!” A weird sensation came from the control stick, making Kerhild, who was piloting one of the Karrdators curse. They knew the basics of the Tellestarle from the documents they obtained in advance, but, it was unbelievably hard to actually pilot it. Even experienced veterans would need some time to get used to its uniqueness. “Who said these are second rate products made by students? Making me waste so much effort... Oh, so, this is the back weapon.” She followed the ‘instructions she learned beforehand’ to manipulate the unfamiliar control stick, and the Tellestarle faithfully moved in accordance to the pilot’s command. The auxiliary arms started moving, placing the Silhouette arms onto its shoulders. Kerhild felt a slight tremour from the pilot seat, squeezing the trigger after the weapons had been deployed. She didn’t even aim seriously, and the magic shot fired straight ahead into the Red Rabbit Knights’ formation. Explosion from the Overed

spell spread further chaos, a signal of the coming nightmare. Knut Dixgard, who was inside the commander office of the fort stared at the ceiling unhappily as he listen to the explosion from the distance, and the tremour in the room. He turned his gaze towards the member of the Red Rabbits who had came to report. "Well then, how many intruders are there?" "Sir! They had two Silhouette Knights and ten soldiers on foot in the beginning. They have taken over the workshop, and stolen several of our Karrdators." Knut might look calm before his subordinate, but he was actually fuming inside. The intruders targeted the Silhouette Knights of the Red Rabbit Knights. No, since they were occupying the workshop that must have been their plan all along. Knut might be furious, but he had to admit that this was an efficient method to attack the fort. At the same time, Knut was baffled by the objectives of the invaders. They didn't seem to be much to gain from destroying the fort and stealing the Silhouette Knights. In this nation that was infested with Demon beasts, almost no one would benefit from the fall of a fort and its Knights. It was the same with the Silhouette Knights. The strongest weapon of humanity had the power of over a hundred men, but was costly to maintain with expendable parts. The ones who could 'benefit' would be the nobles who used them to protect the citizens and the merchants escorting their cargo. Both would benefit from proper channels, so there was no need to risk such an attack. "Commander Molten is engaging with 'Hymerwort'!" The report from a Knight rushing in, pulling Knut out of his thoughts, and he lift his head. The Commander of the Red Rabbit Knights, Molten was joining the fray. With him and Hymerwort, the Knights might wrest back the initiative. "... I'm counting on you, Molten." Knut who saw a ray of hope mumbled softly as if in prayer. The next second, an exceptionally loud boom and tremour reverberated within the fort. Knut's eyes darkened, the battle seemed to be getting more intense. The overed spell fired by the Silhouette arms blazed through the air, hitting the ground before the Red Rabbit Knight's Karrdator. With the explosion of the spell, a large dust cloud was kicked up. The Karrdator who were fighting intensely with the enemy put up their shields and retreated in defence. The Tellestarles which were firing their back weapons moved stiffly, moving cautiously towards the courtyard of the fort. The Red Rabbit Knights opposing them felt a moment of unease. The tables had turned, the Red Rabbits Knights had six Karrdator; one machine on the intruder's side was done, so there were four Karrdator and five Tellestarle, so they had the advantage in numbers. And, the power of the Tellestarle was clear for all to see. The Red Rabbit Knights knew about the stellar performance of the Tellestarles from the fight against the shaker worms, but they had never piloted it before and couldn't judge the situation clearly, leaving them overly guarded. The Red Rabbit Knights hesitated on taking the offensive and the short stalemate made the Copper Fang Knight feel as if they were walking on thin ice. Kerhild couldn't help complaining. "Isn't the ease of control the strong point of the machines in this country!? Really, it's hard to fight like this; the wise choice would be to run..." "The performance of the new models is better. We are lucky the equipment is in good shape." Seeing her members moving the back weapon, Kerhild frowned. "Only that thing is useful. Let's charge out while the enemies are still on their toes. Get ready." The Red Rabbit Knights seemed to be hesitating because of their numbers, so this was a good chance. Even though Kerhild's gang had more machines, they didn't want to battle in machines that were so hard to handle. They used force to rob the machines; even with all five machines in hand, it was better for the damage to be minimal. Their plan was to retreat after getting the new models, so they had prepared a trap in

advance. But, they needed to get away from the fort before activating it. Because of the difficulty in piloting the new model, the plan to break through with their numbers has changed. But, the advantage in numbers remained. They prepared to breakthrough before the Red Rabbit Knights realised the difficulties they are facing. “Karrdators to the front! The new models support from behind!” This became the mission of the Karrdators, which were good in melee combat and were not a target. There were only four, but that was enough to handle the current situation. With the support of the spell shots from the Tellestarle, the courtyard of Fort Casadesus was gradually turning into rubble. The Karrdators of the intruders advanced using this opportunity. The Red Rabbit Knights who were on the defensive kept blocking with their shields as they fell back. “Knights! Let me through!” Suddenly, a feral roar came from behind the Red Rabbit Knights, who were in a dire situation. The Knights’ formation split to the side on reflex, and a Silhouette Knight went in with powerful momentum. That Silhouette Knight raised its warhammer high and swung it down mightily, hitting a charging enemy Karrdator like a magnet drawn to steel. The inertia of the hammer was converted to a shockwave, bending the Karrdator into a ‘<’ shape, shattering its armour and downing it. The impact didn’t just pulverise the abdomen armour and crystal tissue, it even crushed the inner skeleton. The furious blow broke the morale of the intruders, and the Silhouette Knights who showed up taunted them after the blow. “Look at the mess you made, thieves! Don’t think you can get away with this!!” The machine spun the hammer and lifted it again. It wasn’t a Karrdator. The smooth and delicate outer skin was painted red; a majestic external armour was draped over its body. It was the personal Silhouette Knight of the Red Rabbits Commander, Hymerwort. The machine had its own hanger bay and wasn’t harmed by the intruders. “How imposturous to do as you please, I have to put you in your place. Don’t hold back, slaughter them!!” Inside the cockpit, the Red Rabbit Commander, Molten Fredholm, pilot of Hymerwort was roaring like a bear in a bad mood due to hunger. The chaotic Red Rabbits regained their composure and formed up on either side of Hymerwort. The strongest Knight in the band, Hymerwort, steadied the heart of the troops. “Knights, advance! Take down these dirty rats!!” Molten raised his hammer like a ceremonial staff. With his strong encouragement, the Red Rabbits took the offensive. The intruders still had the advantage in numbers, but the morale and teamwork of the Red Rabbits Knight was not to be taken lightly. Hymerwort overtook the advancing Karrdator and led the charge. The Tellestarles sent a few spells their way, but were deflected by the external armour. The flashy armour was damaged, but the main body was fine, charging on ahead. Hymerwort did not have any shields, but it was a heavy machine one size larger than Karrdators, the firepower from the Tellestarle won’t be able to break through its armour so easily. Hymerwort braved through the hail of fire and swung its hammer when it reached the enemy, making a sound akin to an explosion. After witnessing what happened to the Karrdator opposing it, the enemy Karrdator scattered away. “Good, get out of my way, small fries!!” This was exactly what Molten wanted. Hymerwort pulled back his hammer and lifted it overhead and continued forging ahead; Molten was after the Tellestarle situated at the back. The new models might be valuable, but it must not fall into enemy hands. Since the enemy was not resisting, Molten intended to charge over and destroy them. The hammer howled towards the Tellestarle piloted by Kerhild. Cursing the machine that was not moving as she wished, Kerhild managed to evade the giant hammer. But, Molten pulled back his hammer with a spin and followed up with an attack. Living up to his title of Knight

Commander, Molten displayed his skills and attacked continuously with his hammer. Used in conjunction with his heavy armour and powerful machine, it could smash the intruders into pieces. “Ugh... This one is the Command Silhouette Knight? It’s amazingly strong!!” Kerhild was gradually getting used to the machine in the short time she has controlled it. But, before she could master the controls, the merciless, consecutive attack forced her into a corner. As the hammer was about to deliver a devastating blow— “Captain!!” Before the hammer could accelerate, another Tellestarle got in the way with its shield. The movement was rugged, just an assault with brute force. But, it managed to stop the hammer that had accelerated halfway, leaving just a muffled sound. “Annoying!!” The heavy machine, Hymerwort, pushed at the shield of the Tellestarle with its powerful strength. Even though it was similar in size to Karrdators, the power of the strand crystal tissue could match the heavy machine, standing up to Hymerwort. Seeing the Tellestarle wrestling on par with his unit, the surprised Molten twisted the lips under his moustache. “Hmm, so this is the power of the new model, to think it could match my Hymerwort. Although I want it to be part of my Knights, it is a hindrance right now!!” The new models that fell into the hands of the opponents were troubling. With the size of a Karrdator and as powerful as the Hymerwort, it was like a bad joke. At this moment, the other Karrdators charged into the formation of the defenders, turning this into a chaotic battle. This move lowered the spirits of the Red Rabbits, forcing the fight into a stalemate again. “Captain, now’s our chance!!” Kerhild nodded at her subordinate. She understood this was the best opportunity to escape the fort. Hymerwort was too dangerous. They could stand up to it in terms of power output, but they would definitely lose if the battle dragged on. She had no intention of challenging the Commander of a Order of Knights in an unfamiliar machine. With no telling how long the Karrdator on her side could fend off the Red Rabbits, she had given up on escaping with all the Tellestarles. “There’s no choice, those who can still move follow me!!” Instead of fighting with the advantage in numbers, Kerhild prioritised on keeping the machines intact. That was the difference in principle between ‘Knights’ and ‘spies’. Their goal was not to defeat the enemy; battle was just a means to stall for time and a means to ensure safety. Kerhild treated all her subordinates on the field as a way to ‘restrain’ the enemy, firing randomly as she skirted around the battlefield, running towards the unguarded gates. Several shots destroyed the gates from the inside, making it losing its function as a door. A total of three Tellestarle piloted by Kerhild and her underlings ran onto the road in the night, beginning their escape. After breaking out from the chaotic fort, Kerhild and the others were not followed, so they just needed to follow the pre-arranged route to escape. They didn’t take all the new models, but they still managed to get three. On the positive side, most of the Copper Fang Knights stayed behind to stall for time, sacrificing almost all the combatants, but, this was within their expectations. The Copper Fang Knights was a group that took on covert operations and lacked professional fighting prowess. The ‘Wendebadalla’ that took them much effort to smuggle in were their only direct combat units. Using these limited resources to infiltrate a foreign nation’s fort and capturing their machines. Considering the cons of the operation such as the difficulty in piloting Tellestarle, ‘just’ losing the entire group of Knights was a great deal. Things were proceeding smoothly, but Kerhild was emotional and sighed with a complicated feeling of easiness, satisfaction, dissatisfaction and regret. She ignored the casualty of her Knights for the moment, shaking her head and thinking about her next move. She had to link up with the ‘Wendebadalla’ team on stand by in Acquart Forest. With strong steps, they

commanded the Tellestarle to run, their movement stiff but fast. Thin clouds covered the sky; the moon that was almost full illuminated the road by their feet. Three Tellestarle forged ahead without a word. Only the sound of the Silhouette Knights' footsteps could be heard. It was close to their rally point at the entrance of the forest. When Kerhild was about to slow down, she saw a red and white figure in the distance. The moon was bright tonight and the road up ahead was visible. Even without the moonlight, Kerhild had been trained to move in the dark and recognised the true identity of the faint light was Silhouette Knights. On the path to their escape route, a red and white Silhouette Knights were heading in the direction of the fort. Tch! I didn't hear anything about reinforcement!! Why are there Silhouette Knights at a place like this!? With all the combat units of Fort Casadesus tied up, there shouldn't be any pursuers. With the long distance to the other forts, even if they send an urgent message over, calling for aid, the intruders would probably be gone from Fremmevira by the time help arrives. Traveling at night was fraught with danger and would be avoided unless it's an urgent matter. Kerhild couldn't understand why she would encounter Silhouette Knights at such a place. The enemy units that popped up made her agitated; Kerhild didn't know how much time her underlings at the fort could buy her. Right now, the thing they were lacking the most was time. Without the option of lying her way through, Kerhild decided to get rid of the obstacle. She signaled to her underlings and they nodded in silence. The three Tellestarle deployed their back weapons and attacked the red and white Silhouette Knights without warning. These events occurred moments earlier. Setting off from Laihiala Pilot Academy, the carriage ferrying the Boss and the twins, together with Guyale and Earlecumber had a smooth journey. Fort Casadesus was right before them, and they didn't meet with much trouble. With the destination right before them, the group was starting to get careless. "This is much smoother compared to the previous trip." "We had a hard time back then. I won't welcome the shaker worms visiting now." "... You would probably not prefer the shaker worms to visit ever at all." It was getting dark. Fortunately, the group could advance under the bright moonlight. It was taboo to travel at night, but they still persevered on marching towards Fort Casadesus that was not far ahead. They were a small group that could travel easily. Even with the Silhouette Knight escorts, they only had a carriage and a cargo wagon. They moved while they chatted— and suddenly noticed an abnormality in front of them. The sound of heavy metal clanking came from the depths of the darkness along with sharp screeches, familiar sounds for a pilot— the sound of Silhouette Knights churning. As they wondered who was running about recklessly in the night, without realising they were doing the same as well. The sound of footfalls became heavier; the other party came close enough to be discerned in no time. They watched with bated breath as they identified the Silhouette Knights appearing before them to be the new models built by them, and placed under the charge of Fort Casadesus. Not understanding why the other party was charging at them in full speed, they were surprised and confused. Even if something happened and there was a need to send the combat units out, they won't use the new models which were in the minority for the task. Furthermore, the pilots stationed at the fort were not trained to operate them, so there was no reason for them to use these special machines. "What do you think, Di?" "No idea, let's ask them." They decided to confirm the situation, which was the best judgement they could make. But, what happened next was beyond their expectations. The approaching Tellestarle deployed their back weapons. Kerhild and the others on the Tellestarle would never stop at this place, so, they naturally

attacked the machines before them. The unexpected attack from the back weapon had been more effective than melee combat so far. This shocked Edgar and Dietrich; they would never dream that they would be attacked by their allies' Tellestarle. They reacted in time because of their familiarity with this machine and the back weapons. Dietrich, who was piloting the reforged Guyale aside, and Edgar, who was piloting the old model reacted splendidly. Guyale drew his sword and deflected the shots with excellent swordsmanship; Earlecumber raised its shield, blocking the shots Guyale missed, protecting the carriage behind them. Seeing her opponent fending off the attack, Kerhild clicked her tongue and had to stop. Earlecumber opposed them from a distance. Edgar opened the cover to the sound amplifier. "... We are cadets from Laihiala Pilot Academy with business with the Red Rabbit Knights, and on our way to Fort Casadesus. Why have you attacked us without identifying yourselves?! Please tell us if your reasons are justified!!" After hearing the angry speech from Edgar, the Tellestarle remained ominously silent. Kerhild had nothing to say to them. But, after hearing that, she finally knew where the red and white Silhouette Knights hailed from. She was relieved the opponents weren't professional Knights. They should be avoiding battle, but before her were just two school trainer models, so, she decided to break through with their superior skills. Tellestarles' power was also a big threat, even without any gimmicks, just crashing into them would leave any Knight or cadet's machine severely damaged. They had gradually gotten used to the movements of the machine and didn't think much about their adversary, preparing to assault from the front. But they didn't think about who made the new models they were piloting right now. "... Edgar." "I know; I'll leave it to you." There was no doubt the silent and hostile Tellestarles were enemies. It was sad to slash at the machine they worked so hard to make, but the cadets didn't plan to give up. After the short exchange, the two of them moved out without hesitation. The red Silhouette Knight charged ahead with a strong step with the white Silhouette Knight following behind. One Tellestarle took on Guyale, swinging its sword while moving forward. The movement was crude, but fast and strong as well. It should be hard to block, but Guyale placed one sword behind the other and crossed swords with the Tellestarle, not losing to it in power at all. The Guyale directed the blow to the side, swinging its sword down diagonally. The Tellestarle's mighty blow was parried to the side, causing it to lose balance in its upper body. The Copper Fang Knight member tried to pull back the arms, but it wasn't fast enough. The Tellestarle full of openings took the attack of Guyale's dual sword; the flowing steel blade seemed to be pulled to the Tellestarle's right arm, cutting it off at the joints. For the Tellestarle that used its left arm to wield a shield, it was as good as losing its primary means of attack. The face of the Copper Fang Knights member twisted from shock. He was experiencing how Molten felt earlier—the opponent's power output was on par with his. But, there was a reason why this soldier had survived this long in the battlefield— he forcefully pulled back the falling machine and deployed its back weapon in an attempt to retaliate. "Back weapons are strong, but the way you are using it is too naive!" Dietrich shouted and deployed Guyale's back weapon first. The Silhouette arms resting on its shoulders looked like short swords with a broad body. Dietrich took aim through the reticle displayed on the holo monitor and squeezed the trigger on the control stick. The Silhouette arms which received the command fired the magic shot out. It hit the back weapon of its adversary that was just about to shoot, the impact from the vacuum tearing at it, destroying the Silhouette arms of the Tellestarle. It was already off balanced, and with the blow to its upper body, it felt onto

its back immediately. This exchange only took a few seconds. When that Tellestarle was clashing with Guyale, Earlecumber blocked the way of the other two machines. As they might hit their allies during melee combat, the other two Tellestarle turned their attention to Earlecumber. Even though it was two on one, and the enemies were using the new models, Edgar's action didn't seem wise. To exterminate Earlecumber, the Tellestarle Kerhild was piloting raised its sword while the other deployed its back weapon, planning to attack in unison. But, Earlecumber didn't move as they expected— Earlecumber stopped in its tracks halfway and shot at the ground with the Silhouette arms 'Culverin'. The spell exploded, casting dust and debris in the air, using the smoke screen to blind the enemy. "What cheap tricks!" Kerhild moved her machine back, the shots from the other machine failed to hit Earlecumber, flying through thin air. Earlecumber took a step back, raising its shield in defence. It was obviously baiting an attack, which made Kerhild hesitate. At this moment, a sound of something flying could be heard. Turning their heads, they could see Guyale attacking steadily, and the Tellestarle which fell to its blow. Kerhild didn't expect the new models to lose to a cadet trainer so easily. In her anxiety, she thought of a possibility. "Could this be... a new model!? I didn't hear about this, so there are more!?" There was no way she would know, the construction of this machine wasn't planned; and she would definitely not know it was a pair of willful twins that brought the red Knight to this place. When she realised what her adversaries were, she found her side in a tough situation. The opponent was the same model as Tellestarle, and from the looks of things, the pilot was very familiar with it. Compared to them, who were new to the controls, meeting a skilled pilot was a nightmare. They had fallen into a trap; the white machine was obviously a bait. While it was luring the enemy in and defending, the powerful red machine hunted down the other machine. Being tricked because of her carelessness made Kerhild grind her teeth, but the situation wouldn't change for the better like this. Could she defeat the red machine in the machine she couldn't control skillfully? She was not optimistic enough to bet on this possibility. Even at this critical juncture, they still found a weakness: the red machine was a new model, but the white one wasn't. They could tell from the way they fought earlier. If that was the case, if they could stop the red machine, it was possible to take down the white one. The next move was a gamble for them. Unfazed even when their allies had fallen and showing more spirit than before— facing such cautious enemies, Edgar and Dietrich carefully took their stance. Both sides were looking for an opening and the battle became a stalemate. If there was a god of fate, it has not forsaken Kerhild. Something unexpected happened. "Ughhhhhhh!!" The machine brought down by Guyale roared and sat up. It was a big matter for a Silhouette Knight to fall. When seated inside the cockpit of a ten meter tall Silhouette Knight, the pilot would be badly hurt if the machine fell over. Even with the protection of physical boost within the Silhouette Knight, the injury shouldn't be something you can shake off and start moving again. Dietrich who thought he had dealt with the enemy was caught off guard. "What!? How tenacious!!" The Tellestarle charged with its shoulder down from the side, crashing into Guyale and bringing it down. The others couldn't react to the sudden development. "How persistent! Di, are you okay!?" "Well done!" Earlecumber adopted a defensive stance. It was two on one again, and the enemy had Tellestarles, so Edgar had to prioritise on defending himself. Kerhild and his underlings fired their back weapon at the ground unhesitantly, returning what Earlecumber did earlier. A cloud of dust raised in the road that was only illuminated by moonlight. Edgar retreated further; a random barrage by

the enemy would be dangerous enough. He lifted his shield in defence, but the shots didn't come and only the heavy footsteps moving gradually away could be heard. Using this chance while Guyale was hindered, Kerhild chose to escape. "Ugh... Edgar!! Ugh, you bastard, stop bothering me!!" Dietrich who managed to break the fall when his machine fell was conscious, but was unable to move Guyale. Even though the Tellestarle that collided with him was half destroyed, it was still a new model. The distance was too close for him to gain an advantage with his piloting skills. With their powers evenly match, Guyale was pressed firmly onto the ground. "Cough! Fu, haha... don't need to hurry student, play with me a little..." As he spoke, he climbed onto the back of the anxious Dietrich. No matter how skilled Edgar was, the lone Earlecumber couldn't take on the two Tellestarle. "Ke! This is dangerous, but I have to do this, get out of my face!!" Under the extremely close distance, Dietrich didn't think about his own safety and fired the 'Kamtha' mounted on the back weapon. The air that rushed into the vacuum became a burst of wind, the impact hitting both machines. While Guyale and Earlecumber was battling the Tellestarle, the boss and the others fled from the scene in their carriage, heading straight for Fort Casadesus. If they get dragged into the battle between Silhouette Knights, the carriage won't even last a second. If there were Tellestarles out here, the chances that something was up at the fort were high, and they had nowhere else to go, anyway. The horse was foaming at the mouth as it sprinted while dragging the fully loaded cargo. The canvas covering the cargo wagon snapped off, revealing an armoured figure secured with steel wires beneath standing up. It was the strangely shaped, two and a half metre tall Silhouette gear— Motor beat. And, the one activating it were Chid and Ady. They brought their equipped weapon— the portable ballista along under their arms, and carried a bag of spare rounds on their back, jumping off the wagon and started sprinting. True to its description of 'faster than a horse', the heavy armour sprinted with amazing speed. After training so much with Eru and the continual training with Silhouette gear, running was a piece of cake. Edgar was chasing the fleeing Tellestarle and noticed footfalls in the surroundings; two figures smaller than the Silhouette Knights appeared on both side of Earlecumber. Turning the neck of the machine, Edgar discovered the Silhouette gear that was about the height of a Silhouette Knight's knee, were running alongside him. Forgetting the situation because of his anger, he roared: "Wha... You two! What are you doing?!" "As you can see, Edgar-senpai, we are going after the thieves." "That's right. They have two machines, so we will take care of one!" The two of them chased behind the back of the steel green figures into the forest, running under the sporadic moonlight as they answered. "What nonsense is this?! I don't care how good you are, the opponents are Silhouette Knights, the strongest weapon of humanity!? It's too dangerous, leave the thieves to me, so, go back!!" "But Edgar-senpai would be dealing with two of those things alone, then." Edgar groaned and didn't know how to answer. The intruders chose to flee as they were unfamiliar with the controls. But, if the two machines attack Edgar together, he would be at an disadvantage. The serious Edgar was dumbfounded when he faced situations he didn't know how to deal with. "It's not just Edgar-senpai, we are angry, too." "This was made by everyone, right? To steal that thing away is unforgivable!!" Edgar felt the same and couldn't find the words to convince the twins otherwise. After pondering it over, the situation didn't allow Edgar to waste any more time, and these two weren't that obedient and wouldn't follow what he said. Making up his mind, he reluctantly said: "... Don't be reckless and fight them head on. Focus on providing support, prioritise your own

safety at all times!! Got it?” “Yes, we will definitely ‘not be reckless’, Edgar-senpai!”
“Right, we will ‘only provide support’, Edgar-senpai!” The forest became denser and the night was getting darker. This incident stirred up by the new Silhouette Knight models that involved people from a number of factions was heading towards its end.

Knights & Magic - Volume 2 - Chapter 17

While Edgar was chasing the Tellestarles in his Earlecumber, the battle in Fort Casadesus between the Copper Fang Knights and the Red Rabbit Knights was entering its climax. The wreckage of defeated Silhouette Knights was littered all over the floor, the fire shot from the Silhouette arms dyed the battlefield orange. Ernesti observed the intense fight from the damaged workshop. Usually, Eru would be shining with joy from watching the Silhouette Knights battle. But, right now, his face was full of regret. "... They destroyed the machines they couldn't seize, how thorough." On the floor behind him were several Karrdators that were destroyed by the Copper Fang Knights. Eru's gaze kept switching between the wreckage and the battle. "Silhouette Knights are having a large scale battle in front of me, but, I don't have a machine. A pity, such a pity. I will just charge in without one. But, joining a fight between robots without piloting one is too unsightly! That's unforgivable... But, without the all-important machine..." Eru lifted his head towards the sky, sighing the deepest regret ever in his entire life. After giving his all towards robots, he couldn't forgive himself for watching two opposing groups of robots battling and not taking part. But, joining the fray without a machine of his own is against his sense of aesthetics. That was why he barged into the workshop shortly after the battle started, but, he could only see wreckage all around him, depressing him further. As he was filled with regret, the Knights in the courtyard were falling one by one, and the fight would be over if this goes on. Pressured by his feelings of anxiety, he made a decision. "... Alright, I will steal a machine that is currently in operation! There is nothing I can't do if I put my mind to it!" Once he made his decision, Eru acted swiftly. He fired a human sized anchor wire and leapt onto the roof, observing the battlefield from there closely. Even with Eru's skills, it was mission impossible to steal a Silhouette Knight that was being operated. With the persistence of a snake, agility of an eagle and the silence of a spider, he waited for a chance to come. At this moment, Eru noticed something moving in the corner of his eyes. It wasn't in the courtyard where the Silhouette Knights were fighting, but from the vicinity of the gate that was destroyed by the Tellestarle. Looking closely, he could see two carriages hurrying in through the debris of the gate. Some weirdoes who are visiting the fort when there was a fight going on. Eru's puzzlement didn't last long as he spied some 'object' that looked familiar on the cargo wagon. His eyes widened with surprise for a moment, and jumped into the air. The silver flash left the sound of an explosion behind and moved in the night sky. "Hey, can't we go faster!?" "This is the limit, Boss! The horses will fall if we go any faster!!" A carriage was sprinting along the paved road with extraordinary speed. The Boss, who stuck his head out from within was urging the student to accelerate. The horses pushed to run at full speed were already foaming at the mouth as they ran, moments until they collapse from exhaustion. But, the group had a reason why they were in a hurry. At this time, Edgar and Dietrich were fighting the Tellestarle that attacked them while they were travelling. The Boss had to report this to the fort. But,

when the group reached the vicinity of the fort, they were dumbfounded. Fort Casadesus which reigned over the Acquart Forest was glowing bright in the dark from the flames that erupted all over. “Hey, what in the...” Fortunately, they arrived at Fort Casadesus before the horses had fallen from exhaustion. Before them was the destroyed gate, burning buildings and the intense fight between Silhouette Knights. They couldn’t understand the situation and just remained in place. They were seeking refuge at the fort from a fight between Silhouette Knights, but there was no telling if it was safe inside, either. A silver bullet landed before them as they stood there baffled. Eru used ‘air suppression’ to cushion his fall after leaping down from high up, landing steadily before them. The series of sudden events made the group stunned, and the silver bullet asked while tilting his head: “I was wondering who it was, isn’t this the Boss? What are you doing here? This is a battlefield here.” “Ah, silver boy!! What is happening here!?” Eru calmed the Boss, who was on the verge of pouncing on him, smiling awkwardly as he explained: “I don’t really understand, either. I heard there were thieves entering the fort with Karrdators while posing as the Red Rabbit Knights. They occupied the workshop, stole the Silhouette Knights and created this disaster.” As he was explaining, the flash of Overed spells and explosions continued, the chaos was still ongoing. The Boss and the students listened to Eru with their back to the battlefield. The expression on the Boss suddenly changed. “... Oh right, it’s the Tellestarle... We encountered Tellestarle on our way here, and they attacked us without any warning!! Edgar and Di intercepted them, but I don’t know what happened next. Were they the thieves!?” The Boss clenched his fist furiously while Eru besides him nodded, seeming to understand something. “I see, so the thieves were targeting Tellestarle... No, I should say the ‘new model’... This is a ‘robbing incident’, what a bind. I didn’t think such a ‘cliche’ would happen to me.” Luckily, Eru’s mutterings were covered by the noise in the battlefield and the Boss didn’t hear it. There was no telling how they would feel if they were to hear that, but right now, the Boss, who didn’t know that was full of wrath. He remembered something and turned to Eru. “And, what are you doing?” “I am looking for a Silhouette Knight. Remember that I said the thieves occupied the workshop? The machines they didn’t use were all destroyed... I couldn’t do anything but bite on my fingers as the Silhouette Knights fought before me. The actions of the thieves were rational, but, it made me so furious. I was flying around looking to steal a Silhouette Knight... Well...” Eru ended his explanation and looked at what was behind the Boss. He pointed at the wagon with an ominous smile. “The armour on the wagon... is ‘my Motor Beat’, right?” The Boss stroked his beard. The last cargo on the wagon was the blue armour only Eru could use. “Yeah, the little ones asked me to bring it along. Oh right, they took off to chase the Tellestarle.” “They are here, too? And, they are chasing the Tellestarle? How envi... cough, cough, dangerous, I have to help them right now!!” “Hey, you are enjoying this too much... yup, he is not listening.” Eru gave a perfunctory acknowledgement and boarded onto his Motor beat. After the chest armour closed, mana flowed through its entire body and it stood up slowly as the crystal tissue contracted. The Boss couldn’t see Eru, who was behind the armour, but a joyous voice came from inside, and it was easy to imagine Eru’s expression. “Activation complete... With a machine, everything... everything would be alright. Let’s have a good fight. I will settle things on this side and then assist them... Let’s go!!” Before finishing his sentence, Motor beat jumped with enough force to almost crush the carriage. The churning sound of the winch overlapped with the noise of compressed air jettisoning, extending the wire anchor into the

night sky, guiding Motor beat onto the battlefield. Under the shine of the moonlight, its armour had a blue glint that was prominent even in the light from the sea of fire. The Boss spent quite a while chasing the figure of the Motor beat leaping onto the roof and running. He sighed in resignation, turned around and said: "I don't think a duel level Demon beast is as scary as him. Eh, there's no need to sympathise with the thieves... There's nothing else we can do, let's escape." The group came to their senses after hearing him and rushed to the entrance of the fort. The owl hooted and the nocturnal wild animals lifted their heads towards the skies. Under the bright moonlight, the aura of a battle crept into the usually peaceful Acquart Forest. The giant intruder made from steel and crystal tissue barged through the forest. They knocked away branches getting in their way, flattening everything under their feet, shaking the ground. Kerhild Hietakangas, the Captain of the Copper Fang Knights had a sour face while piloting her sprinting Silhouette Knight—Tellestarle. She tightened her grip on the control stick and relaxed the pedal which was pushed to the limits. "Tch! It would be bad to continue running like this." From Fort Casadesus to this place, she had piloted Tellestarle and ran for quite a long distance. That was why she noticed the machine losing the speed it had in the beginning, it was a sign that the mana pool of the Tellestarle gradually drying up. There was still quite some distance before reaching the rendezvous point with the Wendebadalla. If she carried on like this, the mana would be exhausted before she reached the destination and forced to stop all movements. No matter how high the power output was—No, the high power output, the new models was the cause for the mana capacity problem. The Tellestarle didn't have enough mana pool right now; its biggest weakness still remained unresolved. Kerhild didn't care about all this, instead of the theory; she was more concerned about the depleting mana. "We probably can't run any more... I really don't want to use this thing to fight." If she pushed on, there was a good chance her mana would deplete when the pursuers caught up. At that point, they would definitely lose even if the opponent wasn't a new model. She decided to crush the pursuers completely before that happens, escaping would lead to an inevitable defeat. Clicking her tongue, she gave a gesture to her underlings, stopped the Tellestarle and turned around. Apart from the churning of the ether reactor, the forest was quiet once again. Kerhild glared at the approaching white Silhouette Knight on the holo monitor that seemed to be walking casually. On the pilot seat of Earlecumber—the white Silhouette Knight, Edgar saw the Tellestarle decelerating and smiled. "... It seems like their mana pool is running low." The two Tellestarle gave up on escaping and waited for Edgar to come. As someone who had 'experienced' the same problem, Edgar's guess was spot on. "We still have plenty of mana left, so we have the advantage in that area. I will attack straight on, you two will focus on disruption and support. Do not charge in!!" The Silhouette gear running by the feet of the Silhouette Knight saluted half-heartedly and disappeared into the forest. Edgar suppressed his sigh and focused on the Tellestarle, attempting to conceal the movement behind the trees. Shots from the Tellestarle went through the forest, creating a large explosion when they hit the trees. But, Earlecumber didn't even raise its shield, closing the distance fearlessly. "Tch! He saw right through us!!" Realising the shots from the back weapon were just a waste of mana, Kerhild yelled in frustration, withdrawing it. Unlike the Red Rabbit Knights, the cadet was inexperienced, but, familiar with Tellestarle. It was a tougher opponent than she had anticipated. All the tactics Kerhild could think of were within the expectations of the enemy, and resolved it one at a time. Even though her machine had better performance,

she was still pushed to this point. “Split up, pincer attack!” She decided to fight honestly in the end, utilising their advantage in number to its fullest. The band member nodded and attacked Earlecumber. In the dark forest, it was easy to find a Silhouette Knight that reflects light faintly. The presence of a ten meter tall body was difficult to conceal even in the darkness. Edgar noticed the pincer formation from the Tellestarles immediately. He maneuvered Earlecumber deftly, not letting himself become a target. Edgar closed in on one of the enemy—the Tellestarle piloted by Kerhild. There was no way the Tellestarle would stay at the same spot and wait for him, and kept changing its position. Earlecumber used the woods as barriers and avoided fighting two machines at the same time. The Copper Fang Knight member accelerated his Tellestarle, attempting to flank to the back of Earlecumber. The three Silhouette Knight didn’t engage as they moved around the forest searching for the best position. Something was moving around the forest, concealed by the noise of the three Silhouette Knights. It was an armour one quarter the height of a Silhouette Knight—the Silhouette gear, Motor beat. Chid and Ady hid themselves from the enemy, approaching quietly from behind. Chid was slightly out of the Silhouette Knight’s attack range, observing from behind the trees, calming his shallow breath and racing heart. Looking from this angle, the Silhouette Knights are really huge... Chid spent a lot of time with Eru in the pilot faculty, so he had plenty of chances to see Silhouette Knights and had gotten used to them. But, seeing it as a hostile enemy, the machine’s size and prowess made Chid intensely nervous. Silhouette Knights were the strongest weapon of humanity, which meant there were no other human weapons that could match the Silhouette Knight. The ability of the Silhouette gears were still unknown, but, judging from pure combat power, it couldn’t stand up to Silhouette Knights. A strong and big adversary... When Eru was fighting the Behemoth, it probably felt like this. Chid took a deep breath, drawing the sword from the back of his machine, as if he wanted to sever the fear in his heart. The blade was longer than two metres, an oversized two handed sword. There wasn’t any weapon that suited a Silhouette gear; this was something he dug up from the warehouse in a hurry. The giant sword that was difficult for men to handle was just the right size in the hands of the Silhouette gear. I can’t run now. The people who took Tellestarle are infuriating, I will never catch up to teacher if I back down now, let’s do this!! Chid breathed in deeply and rested the sword on his shoulder. Someone called out to him. Not far away, he could see Ady hiding herself with her ballista, and waved at her with his sword. “Okay, let’s do this!” Chid’s Motor Beat raised its arms and shot out the anchor wire with a soft bang. The arrow head with crystal tissue built inside flew to the top of the trees nearby, embedded into a Y-shaped tree firmly. Chid jumped with the roar of the winch churning. Ady, who was one step behind came out from the trees, aiming her portable ballista. “We need to ‘support’ properly!” Chid’s Motor beat reached the top of the trees, kicked at the branch, and charged ahead. At the same time, Ady’s Motor beat started attacking from long range. Steel arrows flew through the air, splitting it. The two Tellestarles worked in concert, forcing Earlecumber into a corner. Earlecumber couldn’t overcome the difference in numbers, taking a few steps back. If the situation didn’t improve, the pilots would be under tremendous mental pressure. Despite risking death with any wrong move, Edgar, who was piloting Earlecumber was as cool as a cucumber, showing a serious expression and strong concentration. He was at an overwhelming disadvantage, but he refused to give up, waiting for the chance to counterattack. His strong determination frustrated Kerhild and her minions who outnumbered him. The opportunity

presented itself at this moment. Kerhild and the Copper Fang member were focusing on Earlecumber, since there were no signs of other machines. The Knight member raised its sword, attempting to attack the back of Earlecumber again. Closing in, he aimed the sword at Earlecumber's back. After taking the first step, something flashed between Earlecumber and Tellestarle. From the faint moonlight in the woods, that thing reflected a threatening metallic light. It landed on the trees in front of the Knight member with a thud, shaking the entire tree. "An attack!? Enemy reinforcement!!" The shocked Knight member pulled back his leg. There was another force beside them and they were clearly hostile to the Tellestarles. This was a huge surprise to them, as the Tellestarle could afford to do a pincer attack because of their numerical advantage. The appearance of another enemy overturned this, making them hesitant to proceed as they searched for the unseen enemy. Seeing this, the twins smiled. The attack just now halted the movement of the band (Knight) member, which was their plan all along. Chid's Motor beat was moving at high speeds above the Silhouette Knight's head, kicking off the trees to accelerate. It then raised its sword, aiming for the head of the Tellestarle. "Woooahhh!!" As the Knight member turned its head, searching the surroundings, something humanoid was flying at him with amazing speed. The unexpected attack surprised him and he tried to dodge by twisting the body of the machine. The machine stopped in its tracks and turned its head unnaturally. The extended two handed sword stabbed at the inside of the helmet, creating screeching sounds and sparks. The Silhouette Knights were tough with its utilisation of physical boost magic, not only did this blow not leave much damage, the crystal eye was as good as new. But, the unnatural evasive movement made the Tellestarle lose its balance. The twins didn't let this good chance get away and continued attacking. Ady's Motor beat was standing firmly at a place close by, lowering her centre of gravity as she aimed her ballista, firing without hesitation. Lock and load, whenever the dull sound of energy being released was heard, giant arrows that could easily be mistaken as lances shot skywards. The earlier shot had given her the bearings, allowing Ady to unleash a storm of arrows at the unbalanced Tellestarle. Seeing the Copper Fang Knight member's Tellestarle being toyed by the attacks from the Silhouette gear, Edgar changed his cautious approach and closed in on Kerhild's machine in an instant. He didn't know how long the twins could hold up the Knight member's machine, so he had to fully utilise this opportunity and take some risks. "Prepare to die!" The sudden ambush and the cadet who switched to the offensive made Kerhild even more frustrated. "These rascals!! Don't look down on us!!" Unlike the hesitation earlier, the Tellestarle's sword was full of terrifying power. The change was incredible. Facing this attack, Earlecumber didn't dodge and took the hit head on. Tellestarle's power was on par with the heavier models, so, Edgar will definitely lose in a direct confrontation. Other than arm power, Edgar put all its weight behind the sword, stopping Tellestarle's sword for an instant. This was Edgar's anti new model skill he came up with from his past experience. It would be useless once the opponent became aware of it, so, he couldn't repeat it too often; it was a double edged sword. That's why Edgar chose to show his hand to his adversary at the very beginning. The stalemate would be broken once the Tellestarle used more power. Before the Tellestarle could do that, Earlecumber pushed his sword down, bringing the Tellestarle's sword along with it. "This guy!?" Earlecumber's left hand that was holding the shield withdrew, and pushed out towards the Tellestarle with great force. This was known as a kite shield, the diamond shaped shield had a horn on its surface. Although it was blunt, it still made a simple bashing weapon.

And, of course, Edgar aimed for the arm. The arms were closely related to the attack power, and structurally speaking, they were weaker than the other parts. A weird sound came from the arm of the Tellestarle. The idea of a follow up attack flashed through Edgar's mind, but he turned and backed away instead. The next second, a barrage of spells from the back weapon landed at where Edgar was standing moments earlier. "It's not going that well..." Edgar observed his opponent calmly, and his face twisted bitterly when he realised something. The enemy didn't realise his shock and retracted the back weapon and didn't pursue. Edgar's earlier attack didn't cause critical damage, the arm seemed serviceable and the sword was still gripped tightly in its hand. Tellestarle's calm and ominous silence changed Edgar's shock into caution. "My apologies to you, cadet." The Tellestarle said suddenly. There was no emotional fluctuation, the steady tone made Edgar even more cautious. "To be honest, I had been underestimating you because you are a cadet. In the end, you have proven to be really capable." The movement of the Tellestarle became slower as it took up a stance, the stiffness in its movement disappeared. Even with an unfamiliar machine, Kerhild had gotten used to it after running such a long distance with it. That's right, she was the Commander of the Copper Fang Knights— it might not be a regular Order of Knights, but the title wouldn't be bestowed on one without ability. "As my apology, I will show it to you. I might have gotten rusty from lack of use... watch this, 'fang of the copper snake'!!" Before she finished speaking, Tellestarle attacked with movements that were faster than her initial strike. The fierce attack was sudden and took everything Earlecumber had to withstand it. "Strong! It's a tough opponent!!"

Earlecumber kept a safe distance and defended with its shield probing the next step it should make. The white and steel colored Silhouette moved at the same time, sprinting with the roar of their machines. The Copper Fang Knights member who was listening to the fight between Earlecumber and Tellestarle from a distance was yelling angrily from an unexpected development of events: "These things keep squirming around!" He could hear the sound of his enemies kicking the trees echoing in the forest, making it hard to determine their position. The Copper Fang Knight swung his sword wildly in frustration, but didn't hit them. At this moment, another giant lance hit the outer skin of the Tellestarle, causing sparks. This situation had been going on for quite some time. There were two opponents, one with a melee weapon flying around the forest; the other firing arrows as big as a lance from afar, working together seamlessly. Their teamwork toyed the Knight member around completely. The size of the adversaries was much smaller than a Silhouette Knight, but this was an advantage in concealing oneself in the forest, helping with the sneak attacks. Their individual attacks were nothing insignificant against the Silhouette Knight's armour reinforced by magic, making it seem tougher than it looks. But, a hit to the joints would be critical even for a Silhouette Knight. They couldn't deal significant damage with their attacks, but they were still a dangerous presence that couldn't be ignored. Unfortunately, the Copper Fang Knight thought the opponents were too small and could be dealt with in one hit. While he was aiming at the enemy jumping through the sky, a barrage of lance attacks fell on his unguarded back. The worst thing was the Tellestarle he was piloting had Silhouette arms on its back. The intrinsic engraving and low endurance couldn't withstand the burst of lances, and lost its functionality from the damage. Realising things were getting dangerous; the Copper Fang Knight went on the defensive. But, it was too late. The Tellestarle had lost one of its advantages. Even though he adopted a defensive position, it resulted in him being attacked one sidedly. The Copper

Fang Knight member was as furious as a wild beast pricked in the butt, and he thought about how to take down these damn enemies. The enemy in charge of long distance attacks was cautious and kept a certain distance, and would flee if he went near. He should dispose of the opponent in melee range. But, if he couldn't stop that thing's movement, or at least keep up with the opponent's speed with his eyes, the plan would end there. While the Knight was forcing his mind that was burning from anger to think, the enemies' attacks continued, fuelling his wrath. Suddenly, a ray of moonlight shone through the trees onto the Tellestarle's crystal eye. The Knight saw the image captured by the holo monitor and inspiration struck. His expression was like a wild beast that found a prey and couldn't wait to pounce. After his numerous attacks got deflected, Chid had given up on denting the tough Silhouette Knight. Basically, Silhouette gear had about the same attack power as humans; it's not possible to defeat Silhouette Knights with it. Even though Chid tried increasing speed and aimed for the weak joints, the Tellestarle wasn't foolish enough to allow that. Edgar senpai is right, we could only stall for time. That should be enough, but I still can't— Chid's Motor beat accelerated by swinging on the wire anchor and jumped. He released the arrow head embedded on the tree and stopped on the next tree with a great force. Chid focused and kicked at the tree branch to accelerate, attacking the Tellestarle that had turned around to defend against the attack from Ady's Motor beat. The attack aiming for the shoulder joints was blocked, ending in failure. As Chid's Motor beat was preparing to retreat, the Tellestarle behind was moving in a different way than before. It had probably lost its composure, swinging its sword wildly. The vegetation was thick in this area; the random attacks won't hit Chid's Motor beat. The power stemming from the strand crystal tissue bashed the trees and branches, sending it all over the place. "What's with that, it's dangerous—" Does he really think it will hit just by swinging wildly? Chid felt the pilot of the Tellestarle had lost his cool and laughed lightly. He understood how his opponent felt, as Chid couldn't bring the Tellestarle down and was troubled, too. The Tellestarle kept repeating its movement, felling some of the trees, but it didn't affect Chid's movement. The accelerating Chid approached the Tellestarle once again. Just as the Knight expected, the Silhouette gear reflected the moonlight as it charged into the edge of the trees. It was bright in the dim forest, marking its position clear to the Knight, who was watching the surroundings. "There you are!! Found you!!" The Knight who was toyed with swung his sword with all his might. It was a fatal situation for the Motor beat that was using the darkness of the forest and its small size. Chid kicked the tree in an attempt to change directions, but the sword swinging down was faster than him. The irony was that this attack, which contained all the hate and anger of the Knight was more powerful than any of his previous attacks. "Chid—!" Ady stared with widened eyes and screamed. She was hesitant about taking action, but, it was too late to attack with the mobile Ballista now. Ady hung on to faint hope and ran. Chid felt all the blood in his body flowing backwards as he stared at the sword of the giant that was closing in with frightening speed. He remembered something. It was related to his teacher— Eru. The advantage Eru has, was his agility and magic abilities. Didn't Eru teach him the spell to 'accelerate in mid-air without footholds'? "Waarrgghhh!!" Silhouette gears was a structure made from metal frame and operated by crystal tissue, while crystal tissues were a catalyst that acted as a medium to draw out magic. Chid kicked out his legs strongly, channelling his mana into the crystal tissue powering the legs. At the same time, an architect spell showed itself splendidly. With no regards to force or control, the burst of air exploded like a bomb. The

spell named by Eru as Air Thrust violently twisted the momentum of Chid's Motor beat. The diagonal slash of the giant's blade went through the space Chid's Motor beat was in moments earlier with destructive force. "Wooahhh—!?" Chid who almost died under the sword went out of control in mid-air. He wasn't used to flying in the air like Eru, and couldn't follow up after forcing himself to use a skill he was not familiar with. Betting on a lifeline, Chid shot out his wire anchor as he was spinning out of control. Fortunately, the wire anchor latched into a tree branch securely, and would allow Chid to regain his balance by retracting it. But, before Chid could put this into action, he faced the problem of his wire anchor running out. "Kya!" The wire anchor that had been pulled to its maximum length shook Chid for a moment; the strong momentum made Chid's Motor beat changed its direction to the side. It was anchored to a tree by the wires, spinning around it in mid-air. Confused by the centrifugal force, Chid maintained his speed and saw the ground approaching and scream. He straightened the machine with all his might and moderate force to brake by Air Compression, learning from his earlier mistake. He followed that with Air Suspension— another magic taught by Eru personally— and used the air to slow himself down, absorbing the impact with the ground. Chid, who was about to crash heavily into the ground managed to make a slow and safe landing. "Phew... That was close... really close..." Because he was using large amounts of mana recklessly, Chid panted hard to replenish his mana and calmed his beating heart as he stood up. It's not just the drop in his mana that made him tremble; the near death experience played a part, too. But, the current situation didn't allow him a chance to take a break. Tremours that shook the ground and the sound of the footfalls of a giant were drawing closer. The Tellestarle saw what happened, too. The Knight piloting Tellestarle thought Chid would crash into the ground and die, but realising his opponents were hard to handle, he had to confirm Chid's death with his own eyes before relaxing. That's why he was heading towards Chid to land the final blow. There was no other choice but to escape. Chid forced himself to breath in deeply, and activated the Silhouette gear as he breathed out evenly. He tried using the wire anchor to move large distance, but was stunned when he saw the hand of the machine. The anchor that was bounded to the tree when he fell couldn't be used, and didn't work when he pulled at it. Chid gritted his teeth, pulled out the device from his arm. It would just get in his way right now. Chid squeezed out his last ounce of strength to run, putting as much distance as he could away from the attack of the titan. Ady's Motor beat was sprinting in the forest, kicking up the dirt as she fired her mobile ballista at the Tellestarle going after Chid. But, the armour mercilessly deflected all the attacks. It did nothing to stop the Tellestarle, and had no visible effect at all. With both party moving, it would take amazing luck and coincidence for a hit to be effective. Ady endured the raising anxiety in her heart, and kept firing her ballista non-stop, hoping to stall the enemy. But, the Tellestarle was like a hungry beast who found a wounded prey, licking its lips as it approached Chid step by step. Chid's Motor beat appeared to be severely weakened, and it seemed unlikely it could escape. Right now, the only one who could stop the Tellestarle and help Chid would be Ady. With a prayer in her heart, she continued her attack. But, her prayers weren't answered. The Tellestarle who had locked onto Chid's Motor beat raised its sword again, speeding up in order to deliver the final blow. Just a few more steps and Chid's Motor beat would be within sword range. The Tellestarle took a final giant stride. Ady's vision was blurred by tears, Chid's Motor beat stopped struggling and the Knight was sneering, elated by the prospect of his revenge. Something unexpected happened. There was 'something'

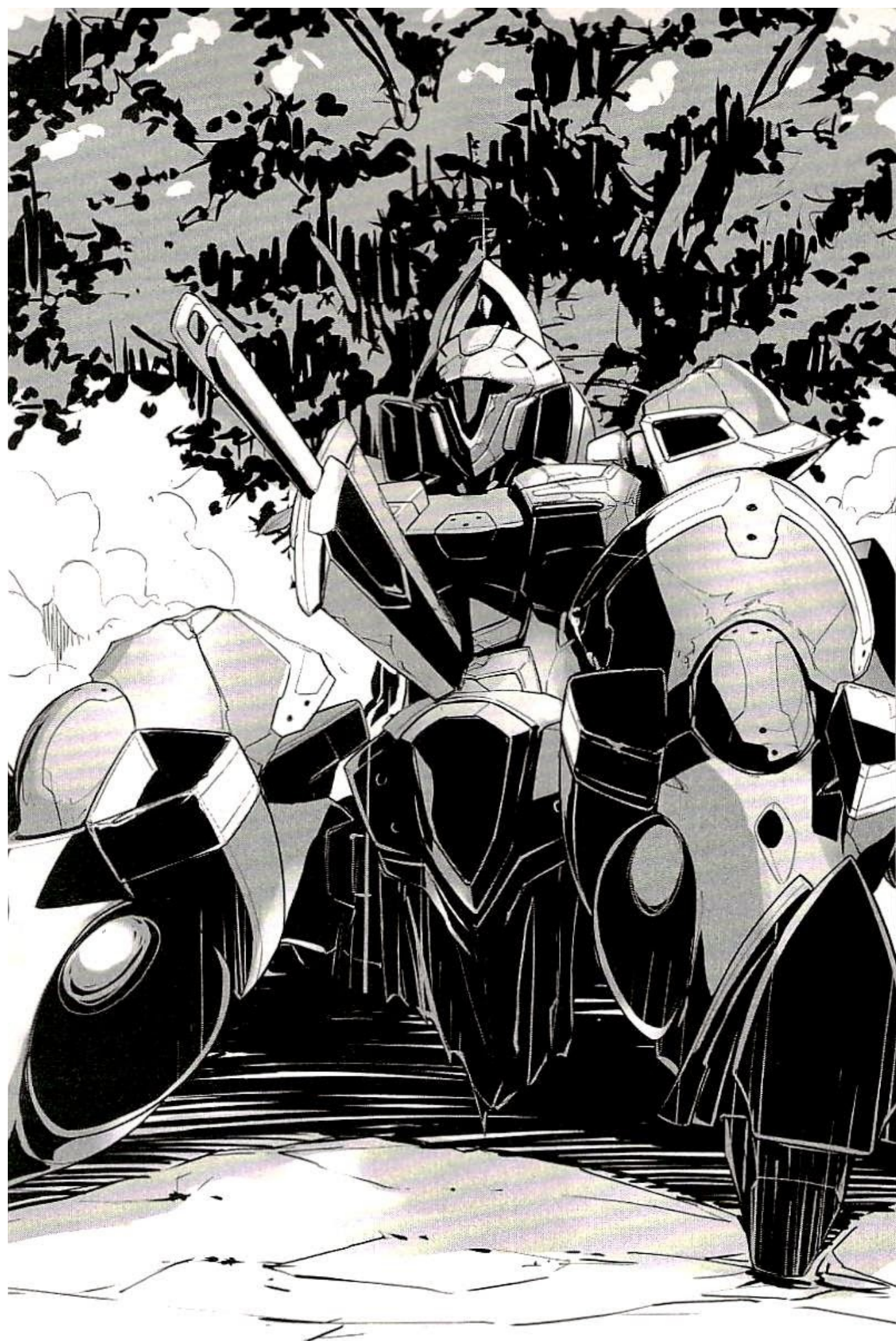
behind Chid's Motor beat, right in the path of the Tellestarle, which was Chid's broken wire. The wire was tied securely to the trees at the height of the Silhouette gear—which was the legs of the Tellestarle. Not noticing the sudden attack—the Tellestarle, who took the step with all its might entangled the wire, the taut wire stopped the leg of the giant, stopping it in its tracks. This was the weakness of the bipedal Silhouette Knight which walks like humans were fated to have. The Tellestarle, who was tripping while shifting its centre of gravity, fell forward just like that. The Copper Fang Knight pilot was probably lost in his anger and couldn't react in time. The Tellestarle fell forward elegantly, bumping its head into a tree branch with a dull clang. A human would probably die from such a hit. The giant's head maintained this position as it fell, leaving a cloud of dust and the sound of a crash in its wake. "... Eh, what, what happened...?" "Chid! Chid! Are you alright!? Are you still alive!?" Chid's jaw was slack the entire time, watching the event unfold behind him. The Tellestarle who fell loudly didn't move, lying prone to the ground amidst the dust. Ady, who arrived a bit late, ran to Chid's side. Confirming that Chid was standing stunned in place, she breathed a sigh of relief. "Great! I thought I wouldn't make it!! Ahh, this is great...!! But, I didn't expect you to prepare such a trap as you were escaping... Amazing, well done, Chid!!" "Ahhh?... Eh?? Ahhh, hmmm? Ohhh, what?" Compared to Chid, who was laughing dryly as he averted his eyes, Ady was all smiles, swinging her arms strongly to express her joy. "Anyway, let's take care of this fellow." After that, Chid clenched his slightly trembling hands. The Tellestarle fell slowly. It hit a tree on the way down, the Copper Fang Knight who was inside the twisted machine didn't know what happened and panicked. The Tellestarle didn't have time to break the fall and crashed onto the ground directly. Its momentum was slowed when it hit the tree, but the impact from the fall still affected the pilot inside the cockpit. The force coming from his back pushed out all the air in his lungs, making him cough a few times. Thanks to the seatbelt, he was fine after being shaken in his seat. If not for the seat belt, he might have turned into minced meat after tumbling around in the cockpit. After the machine stopped moving, the Knight shook his head, and tried to grasp the situation. The head of the machine probably suffered serious damage; the image on the holo monitor was distorted and could disappear anytime. The damage to the entire body wasn't clear, but, he knew the reactor was fine from the steady vibration under his seat. No matter what, the first thing he needed to do was to stand the machine up. Pushing his aching body, the Knight reaches for the control stick. Suddenly, the sharp sound of air gushing out was heard. The holo monitor projecting a twisted image was gone as the chest armour opened. Replacing that was the cool night air and the scene of the real world. Before him was the moon. The Knight stared at it, lost for a moment. The almost perfectly spherical moon was exceptionally bright, and someone was standing before it. He still couldn't focus, thinking that this was the giant armoured Knight that he was fighting all this while. "Taste my fist of punishment!!" After hearing an exceptionally young shriek, his vision was filled by the view of an extra large iron fist, and that was the last thing he remembered. Again, returning to the scene in Fort Casadesus. After the Copper Fang Knights' Captain Kerhild accomplished her main objective—seizing the new model, and had escaped, the rest of the Knights that chose to stay behind continued battling the Red Rabbit Knights. The Red Rabbits were full of wrath towards the invaders who had caused much destruction, determined to wipe them out. If the invaders turned their back, they would definitely be done in by countless swords. That was as good as suicide, so the Copper Fang Knights had

no choice but to engage. But, unexpectedly, the battle was still at an impasse. And, naturally, they rallied around the two new models that stayed behind. It might be hard to control, but its powerful performance more than made up for this. As the phrase goes, ‘an untamed horse could run fast, too’. Facing such tenacious enemies, the Red Rabbits couldn’t hold back their anxiety. At this moment, a gust of wind swept through the burning battlefield, even knocking the red flames aside. It was a prominent blue whirlwind — the combination of the Silhouette gear, Motor beat and Ernesti. He used the anchor wire to fly around the walls of the fort and observe the situation. Watching from up high, it was easy to identify the enemy from the ally. The one standing with the Tellestarle was the enemy. He leapt towards the enemy Karrdator nearby. Silhouette gear was one size bigger than humans, but was only a quarter the height of Silhouette Knights. He wasn’t discovered by the Karrdator when Eru landed softly on its shoulders. “Good night Mr. Thief. I made you wait, let me join in, too.” The Knight who was only focusing on the Red Rabbits was shocked by the sudden appearance of the armoured Knight appearing on the holo monitor. Before he could understand what was happening, the seemingly large palm of Motor beat covered the holo monitor. For Silhouette Knights, the head exists in order to protect the ‘eye crystal’. Naturally, it was covered by helmets and heavily protected by armour. But, the Motor beat that was smaller than the Silhouette Knight reached in through the gaps of the armour and attacked the eye crystal directly. It was too close for the image to focus, the blurry palm was glowing faintly from magic, materialising into a mid-tier spell that was more powerful than Fireball — Flame Strike. No matter how tough the armour of the Silhouette Knight was, it wouldn’t last long if the insides were attacked directly. The flames filled every corners of his vision before the holo monitor finally lost its light— the eye crystal was destroyed. With the light source gone, the sealed cockpit fell into darkness. This unexpected development made the Copper Fang Knight panic. Before the enemy Karrdator could thrash about from confusion, Motor beat fired the anchor wire to the Tellestarle nearby and swung in the air. With the direction adjusted slightly from air compression, the Motor Beat charged towards the back of the knees of the machine. Before the targeted Tellestarle realised a foreign object was entangling it, Motor Beat had fired a few dozen Flame Lances into the knee joint, creating a grand explosion at the thinner armour there, breaking the joint. The Motor beat delivered the final blow with a kick, and the Tellestarle lost its balance and fell. When their comrades, including the new model fell one after another, the Copper Fang Knights fell into disarray. The Red Rabbits couldn’t fathom what was happening, but, they could see that the strange blue armour was putting on a spectacular performance. When another Karrdator bent its knees, the Copper Fang Knights finally noticed the full plate armour that was flying around them. They attempted to strike it down with their swords in a hurry, but the blue armour was one step faster than the giant’s sword, disappearing from view as if something was pulling it in. The Motor beat stopped at the top of the fort’s wall once again, moving swiftly before attacking the other Tellestarle. Using Air Suspension while dropping from the blind spot at the top of its head, Eru landed on the shoulder of the machine like a shadow. In order to fend off the Red Rabbits, the Copper Fang Knight deployed its back weapon. Eru showed a devious smile. He was the ‘proposer’ of the back weapon; no one understood its structure and functions more than him. Eru had a way of using this against his enemies. Keeping his balance, Eru swiftly took out the sub arms supporting the Silhouette arms, destroying the part equivalent to the ‘hands’ and pulled on the silver nerve to move the

Silhouette arms. Eru deftly manipulated Motor Beat, turning the Silhouette arms that were taller than the Silhouette gear around, pointing it at the other Silhouette arms and securing it. There was no way the Copper Fang Knight knew his machine was heading towards tragedy. He pulled the trigger without hesitation. The Silhouette arms received adequate mana and an Overed spell materialised at its tip. And, the tip which was sabotaged by Eru exploded immediately, sending a shock wave as the Silhouette arms exploded. Before the Tellestarle could understand what happened, it was sent flying by the force, falling head first into the ground and stopped moving. “Tamayaa—” <TL: something you yell when setting off fireworks in Japan.> Eru, who was on its shoulder moments ago let out a cheerful comment as it somersaulted gracefully in the air and casually landed. And, so, the outnumbered Copper Fang Knights were taken down in no time. The struggle earlier was like a lie, that’s how the victory felt like. Molten couldn’t hold back his sigh of resignation. The invaders he himself couldn’t handle were put down like a joke with unorthodox moves—and, the one that did it was a small Silhouette Knight imitation he had never seen before. Other than ridiculous, he couldn’t think of a better term to describe it. Molten, who was suppressing his frustration couldn’t help sighing towards the sky, when he saw the figure exiting the blue armour after the battle ended. “... Ah— Ernesti, it’s you.” He worked very hard to not show any fatigue in his voice. Eru opened the armour of his Silhouette gear, Motor beat. The terrifying thing was that his face dyed in the red glow of the flames was showing a huge satisfactory smile. “Yes, Knight Commander. Sorry I’m late; I couldn’t find a machine just now.” That’s not the problem. Molten used his willpower to swallow back these words. “... No, I need to thank you for helping us with these troublesome enemies. I have much to ask, but, let’s leave it for later. Since the issue here is settled, we need to chase the ones that ran off... We might not make it in time though.” Molten stroked the neat beard he was proud of, and crossed his arms. Quite some time had passed since the thieves, who stole the Tellestarle, had left. It was normal to assume they were beyond reach. “As for this, I have something to report to you. The students travelling from Laihiala Academy met the Tellestarle who was escaping by chance. They report that they were attacked as they were approaching the suspicious group, and engaged in battle immediately. They should have stalled quite a bit of time; the thieves might still be nearby.” Eru might not be able to see him, but, a ferocious smile returned to Molten’s face, just like a hunter going after its prey. Hymerwort turned to the surviving Karrdator and ordered: “You heard him, I will be going after the thieves that had run off, but, we can’t leave the heavily damaged fort alone. I order you all to stay behind to defend it.” The Red Rabbit Knights, which has three squads at full strength, had only 20% of its combat forces left. Destroying the enemy was as good as dwindling their own forces, and that was the terrible part of the invader’s scheme. Even if they deployed the few damaged Karrdators here, it will only make them uneasy. Hence, they should be left to defend the fort, while the strongest machine that was almost undamaged, Hymerwort, pursued. They had no time to hesitate. “Alright, Ernesti, as you can see, we are short handed. I would like to request you and your weird armour to lead the way and assist me.” “Definitely. Be it leading the way or assisting you, I will do all that I can.” They left this place to the Karrdator who saluted them. Hymerwort and Motor beat dashed out to the road gallantly. The metallic clashes in the distance stopped. Dietrich felt complicated with half uneasiness and half expectation, raising his eyebrow. He pressed on to the pedal harder, increasing Guyale’s pace. He raced on, the surroundings illuminated solely by

moonlight, not decreasing his almost suicidal speed. The footfalls of the iron giant mixed with the scraping of metal against metal. Looking carefully, the crimson armour on it was twisted all over. With every step it took, some parts of the armour were even creating sparks from the friction. Guyale was tangled up with Tellestarle before entering the forest, which stalled him. Dietrich was so angry that he fired his back weapon despite the damage to his own machine, regaining freedom for a short time. But, the thing that stumped him was the half destroyed Tellestarle, who refused to release Guyale's leg. That fearless determination took Guyale a lot of effort to break out of. The damage was minimal, but, Dietrich felt that the other party got his way when he thought about the time he wasted. He finally subdued the Tellestarle completely in the end. Dietrich then chased after the escaping Tellestarle and Earlecumber who was following it. Acquart Forest was filled with signs of violent battles and movement of Silhouette Knights, so, it was easy to track. He focused on hurrying. As he ran, Guyale suddenly came to an empty plot of land. No, the place wasn't this bare originally. The signs of slashes on the trees and things falling all over showed that an intense battle happened here. Dietrich shook off the ominous feeling creeping up his back and surveyed the area. The surroundings was filled with dark trees with wild grass growing beneath. He looked around him and found something pure white that didn't fit in the forest. The pure white here could only be one thing. "Edgar! I have been looking for you, where is the Telle..."

As he approached the white object, Dietrich's voice became smaller. He recognised the giant resting against the tree— the Silhouette Knight, Earlecumber, and gasped.



The white and flawless armour was twisted from an intense battle, the colour turning dim and dull. It was probably slashed at the shoulder; the entire right arm was missing, even the chest armour nearby was peeled off. The lifelessly dangling left arm had a shield attached, which was covered with scars of explosion and slashes, it was still swinging slightly. There was slight damage, but, the legs were in good condition. That was the proof that Earlecumber fought until the very end. At the same time, the sword that pinned Earlecumber to the tree by the stomach announced its defeat clearer than a picture that says a thousand words. They probably struck at the same time. An arm severed at the elbow was still holding the sword sticking through Earlecumber's stomach, and seemed to belong to a Tellestarle. Listening carefully, a churning noise could be heard from within the machine. The ether reactor wasn't functional, but it was still running. Earlecumber remained motionless. Dietrich who couldn't hold back his frustration ran towards it. "...!? Edgar!! Hey, answer me! Are you alright!?" An indescribable feeling filled Dietrich's heart. The damage to the Silhouette Knight does not indicate the injury that the pilot incurred. But, because the Silhouette Knight was humanoid in shape, people tend to assume that the pilot suffered similar injuries. Reacting to Dietrich's shouts, Earlecumber moved its neck slowly, as if it was rusted. Half of the armour covering the head had been squashed; the unsteady gaze looked over from the crystal eye. "... Ugh, is it Di? Sorry, I let the Tellestarle get away..." "Ah, I see. But, are you okay!? Hang on, I will send you to the fort..." Dietrich relaxed and suggested, but, was interrupted by Edgar's loud voice. "Di! Earlecumber's reactor is shot and it can't move, but, it won't blow up any time soon. Aside from some bruises from the crash, I am fine. More importantly, it hadn't been long, go pursue Tellestarle...!?" Dietrich was caught in a dilemma. Was it fine to abandon the seriously damaged Earlecumber and go after Tellestarle? Edgar said he was fine, but, there was no guarantee that it was true. Seeing his rival and friend, who competed with him in the pilot faculty all this time in a bind made Dietrich hesitate to chase Tellestarle. No, he was hesitating about leaving this place. "Di, we got this far, don't let him slip away, I'm counting on you!" "... Alright, leave it to me!?" The thing that made up his mind was the words of his friend. Dietrich could feel the strong determination within Edgar's voice, and it swept his doubts away. He couldn't ignore the will that pushed Earlecumber to fight on until it broke down. Dietrich's friend had not given up on the fight. Guyale nodded firmly, turned around and chased Tellestarle, charging into the forest. Hearing the footsteps of Guyale grow distant, Edgar managed to squeeze a smile onto his bitter facial expression. He could no longer see the twisted image displayed on the holo monitor. As he listened to the fading footfalls, he imagined the scene of someone running off. "I'm counting on you, Di. I am going to rest for a while..." Edgar breathed out, holding back his moan and slowly relaxing his body. He didn't even have the strength to wipe the red liquid dripping from his forehead, and submerged into the darkness once again. The crimson Silhouette Knight morphed into a whirlwind, sprinting in the forest. Dietrich used his anger to suppress the anxiety welling in his chest, pushing his machine to go forth. Guyale had already drawn both its swords and deployed its back weapon, ready to fight. The moment he finds Tellestarle, Dietrich's blade smothering from wrath would joyously send a final blow to the enemy. As he ran, Dietrich could tell from the tracks in the forest that the Tellestarle was in terrible condition. Earlecumber dealt serious damage to Tellestarle, as expected, and Guyale's mission was to attack the enemy and deal the final blow. "It

couldn't have gone too far with such damage...! Where is it!?" After running for quite some time, Dietrich noticed something from the senses he honed through his many battles. In the tracks in front of him, something was squirming in the darkness. "That is... No, it's not Tellestarle!?" His instinct told him the enemy he was looking for wasn't in front of him. He felt there were 'numerous' beings. Those things seemed to notice that Guyale was approaching, and crawled out from the fog of darkness with a roar. The true identity of these things was Demon beasts. From their size, they were definitely duel level, and it was a 'swarm' in numbers. The track of Tellestarle vanished in the middle of this group. "What... what is happening!?" The track had been trampled by the squirming Demon beasts and was difficult to identify. He was just one step away from victory, and was stopped by an unexpected ambush. Dietrich was furious, and had the illusion of everything before him turning red. His emotions reached the boiling point and he didn't notice how unnatural this situation was. Before him was a swarm of demon beasts from a 'mixture of species'. Demon beast was just a general term and consisted of multiple types. It was normally impossible to mobilise them together, as they have the concept of territory and nests. In other words, the swarm that was blocking his way was a 'unnatural occurrence'. Several of them lowered their stance and growled at Guyale. They weren't just gathered together, each one of them were highly agitated. There were some that bared their teeth at each other, trying to impose dominance over each other. In such a situation, what would happen if a giant emitting an aura of fury was to approach? The Demon beasts were sensitive to changes. Using their instincts, the beast judged the giant, that was standing still from anger and confusion, to be an enemy and charged with crazed vigour. Dietrich felt regret over showing this fatal opening as he took a stance against the Demon beast charging towards him. He had calmed down slightly after losing his cool earlier. The remnant of calmness in his mind grasped the situation, directing his wrath into the will to attack, allowing Guyale to display an even more powerful ability. A mighty slash decapitated a flame tiger, while the shot from 'Kamtha' killed another. As he fought the Demon beasts, Dietrich realised 'something' and frowned. His original goal was to pursue the escaping Tellestarle; he didn't have time to deal with so many Demon beasts. His only hope, which was the tracks left behind had already been trampled over. Even if he could break through this swarm, it would be impossible to catch up. What about going around this swarm? But, with so many Demon beasts congregating, their active area would be large too. How far would he need to detour in order to avoid detection? Just thinking about it made him feel it was foolish. Even if he avoided battle with the Demon beasts, he will lose the only clue to help him track the enemy. Dietrich wasn't optimistic about his chances of finding his target by wandering around the forest. Did I lose him? The thought flashed across Dietrich's mind, and he was aware of something uneasy pricking at his heart. He cursed the 'coincidence' of the demon beasts blocking his path. No matter how angry Dietrich was, he wouldn't do something as dumb as charging into the midst of a swarm of Demon beasts. But, the situation developed by itself. As Dietrich stood his ground, the scent of blood from the Demon beast he killed spread out towards the other Demon beasts, agitating them further, and drawing them towards the source of the scent. And, the source of the bloody smell stemmed from the crimson Knight. Watching the Demon beasts flooding out of the forest one after another, Dietrich couldn't help groaning a curse. Despite his anger, he moved Guyale back. But, this action was too late and he didn't have much choice. Dietrich couldn't shake off the blunt bear and flame tiger no

matter what he did. Dietrich needed to find a place to fight, but, there were too many Demon beasts. If they gang up on him, even the new Guyale would be in danger. As Dietrich retreated, he cautiously gauged the opportune time to attack. The Demon beasts running on four legs were naturally faster than Guyale, and entered his attack range. As they were about to pounce him from behind, Guyale stopped in its tracks, and slashed behind him like a whirlwind. The endless power of the new model raised this attack into a fatal blow. Ignoring the flame tiger it defeated in mid-air, Guyale fired its 'Kamtha' to keep the others at bay. As the Demon beasts collided together and fell into confusion, Guyale retreated once again to buy time. But, a strong force tugged onto its hand, making it stop. A blunt dragon was biting onto Guyale's left hand. This type of Demon beast was strong; a normal Silhouette Knight wouldn't be able to match it. Guyale didn't lose in terms of strength, but, he was forced to stay in this position, a grave mistake. Meanwhile, the Demon beasts picked themselves up and drew closer. Dietrich moaned hysterically like he used to, thinking about how many he could take out, with his Silhouette arms before they come closer. Instead of resignation, his sigh contained the ferocious will to fight. Suddenly, numerous objects flew over the top of Guyale's head with a screech. Instead of precision, the giant arrows that relied more on numbers flew in one after another, sticking into the faces and legs of the Demon beasts. Seeing several Demon beasts fall in pain, Dietrich used this chance to cut off the blunt dragon's head. Guyale, who regained its freedom from the crisis used the chance to look at the armour on the trees, there were two Silhouette gears there. From what he remembered, there were only three people who could control Silhouette gears proficiently, and two of them journeyed with him. "Di-senpai! We will cover you, so, please fall back a little!!" "Why are there so many Demon beasts!? Ah — annoying!" The two of them— the twins Chid and Ady didn't hide their displeasure of the sight of the swarm of Demon beasts, aiming their mobile ballistas and firing off a barrage. The Demon beast who was hit in the head roared and fell in pain, and the swarm scattered. Dietrich finally obtained a break in the action, which was more valuable than gold, but— "Ah—Di-senpai, sorry, that barrage used up all the arrows. Let's use this chance to flee." "...It's enough, thanks for the big help. You guys go first." Right now, the twins who strutted their stuff during the battle with Tellestarle had limited supplies left, and it was depleted in the last burst that was fired. Dietrich took a slow deep breath. The covering fire from his juniors cooled his overheated emotions down, allowing him to look at the big picture. Guyale was wary about retreating too hastily, but, Chid thought Dietrich wasn't fast enough. "They will catch up if you don't hurry!" "Yes, I think so, too. But, Edgar is still behind us, and he might get dragged in if we let them draw too close. It seems like we have to defeat these guys before that happens." "Edgar-senpai!? We can't let that happen! We will help, too!!" The twins were full of spirit, but they were down to the two handed sword in their hands right now. Chid's Motor beat was even missing its anchor wire. Even with their help, it wasn't enough against the swarm of Demon beasts. "You have exhausted your arrows right? Thanks to you, the Demon beasts have scattered. I will figure this out myself." Dietrich gave an exceedingly calm reply. There was no hint of anxiety or anger in his tone. They couldn't escape easily, these Demon beast are obstacles blocking his pursuit anyway. Since there was no choice but to fight, there was no need to be troubled over this. This made Dietrich feel more at ease. "So, bring Edgar along with you and leave. This is nothing, leave it to me..." "Then, let me accompany you in their place." Before the grumpy faced twins could say anything, someone replied from an

unexpected direction. Immediately after that, the one replying leapt over their heads and showed himself. A familiar blue figure faced the swarm of Demon beasts with no hesitation. When Dietrich recognised who it was, the worries in his mind vanished. As he suppressed his smile, Chid and Ady cheered, and high fived each other. The person who flew in from behind them—Ernesti, who was piloting a blue Silhouette gear, smiled audaciously as he watched the swarm of Demon beasts close in. “Could you explain the situation? The prey... cough, the Tellestale, where is it? These prey... cough, cough, what is with this swarm of Demon beasts?” In Dietrich’s eyes, that demeanor of being overly enthusiastic overlapped with his previous memories. This boy could even fight a hopelessly big Demon beast joyfully. Eru would definitely kick up a storm here, Demon beasts of this level were no match for him. Dietrich smiled bitterly. “I ran into this swarm as I was chasing after Tellestarle. Its track goes right through the swarm... but, it had been trampled over, and is impossible to trace. I don’t know why there are Demon beasts at such a place. These things trampled over Tellestarle’s tracks and make me so mad. And, Edgar is down, resting somewhere behind us. I am thinking about stopping them right here.” “I see, that means we should dispose of them first, right?” “Ahh, yeah, let’s do that. Please give it your all, just like that time with the Behemoth.” “I understand.” The blue Silhouette gear disregarded the heavy pressure from the Demon beasts and jumped right into the middle of the swarm. Compared to the Silhouette gear, duel level Demon beasts were much larger, and a swarm of them were coming like a tsunami. The small armour looked helpless before the tide washing in. But, before that happened, the sound of an explosion overlapped with the sound of footsteps, and the Motor beat accelerated. It charged into the gap between the Demon beasts with the speed of a bullet, covered by the glow of magic as it passed by. The flame bullets which materialised hit the face of the Demon beasts, making the Demon beasts squirm painfully from their burnt nose and rampage. The swarm fell into a vicious cycle of chaos in no time. Even though he had no time to spare, Dietrich had the urge to facepalm himself. He knew Eru would do something like that, and Eru didn’t disappoint and made a huge scene. Dietrich noticed something. The Motor beat was causing disarray among the Demon beasts, but that’s the limit of what it could do. It didn’t possess the attack power capable of taking down duel level Demon beasts after all. Guyale aimed its back weapon and raised both of its swords. If that was so, his duty was to deliver the final blow. He couldn’t let this golden opportunity go. A few Demon beasts that broke out of the chaos charged at the crimson Knight. As Dietrich prepared to engage, a burst of wind dashed from his side. “Waaarrgrghhhh!!” A lump of metal smashed into the body of a Demon beast with a feral roar. This wasn’t just strength, it was also weight and speed that turned the Demon beast into minced meat, and sent it right back into the forest. Ignoring the wide eyed Dietrich, Hymerwort raised its hammer and repeated the same procedure and crushed the incoming Demon beasts, sending it to its comrade. “Hmmm, I heard the pilot of the new model in pursuit was a cadet, but I didn’t imagine you would not give an inch even in the face of this swarm of Demon beasts! Impressive guts. Allow me to help you!” As Hymerwort chatted, it continued to turn one Demon beast after another into mush. Even though it wasn’t a new model, the tough armour of Hymerwort performed fantastically in this chaotic battle. As it was a heavy model, its power was on par with the new model and swept the Demon beasts away with ease. With the appearance of strong allies, Guyale didn’t just stand there. Using the typhoon created by Hymerwort as a shield, it acted like a

guerrilla, taking down the Demon beasts one at a time. There were a few dozen Demon beasts in this swarm, a far larger scale than the one which attacked Dallier Village. But, the group didn't pay this any heed as Eru, Chid and Ady created havoc with their Silhouette gear, separating the beasts into smaller groups for Hymerwort and Guyale to finish off. Even if they were on a roll, it still took a lot of time to exterminate such a large number of Demon beasts. When the battle was over, the sky to the east had started turning white. Eru opened the armour in Motor beat and surveyed the area. The forest which was the battlefield was a terrible sight. There were trees that were broken and had fallen over, barren grounds and the carcasses of gigantic beasts. Hymerwort and Guyale, who had taken down numerous Demon beasts were battered as the machines were pushed to its limit. "... Let's return to the fort." Eru calmly announced the end of the fight to Guyale, who was still ready for combat. "... It's no good?" "Even if you want to pursue it, it will be too late. And, look at this terrible scene, there is no way to tell which direction the thief fled in. We accumulated too much fatigue, too, it is impossible even if we try." "It's a pity, but, let's call for aid from somewhere else..." In response to Dietrich's request, Eru shook his head. "Fort Casadesus is in a terrible state, there is no telling when they can muster the manpower. And, with how well they executed the attack, I don't think the thief would simply run. If they use decoys or disguises, it would be hard to track. We could try asking for aid, but, there is no guarantee..." After hearing him say that, Dietrich forced his stiff hand to release the control stick and pull it back. Guyale's back weapon screeched painfully as it retracted. The crimson Knight kept the swords in its hands and walked slowly towards the fort. After the tense and chaotic night, the day was breaking. The sunlight scattered the darkness in the forest, revealing the trace of destruction left in Acquart Forest. Those involved in the incident were dead tired, and their reward was the damaged fortress and numerous sacrifices. The few surviving Karrdators pushed their tired bodies to perform their duties. Fortunately, the fort was built from stone, so the fire didn't spread to the inside, allowing Fort Casadesus, which caught fire at one point to remain operational. But, its combat force was almost wiped out, with both manpower and the Silhouette Knights pushed to the brink. Duke Knut Dixgard, seated in the Top Level War Room, a few wrinkles added to his aged, but sharp expression. Because of this incident that happened through the night, most of the people in Fort Casadesus stayed up the entire night. For the duke, who was between middle and elderly aged, working through the night was a heavy burden. But, his appearance and voice showed no sign of weakness. "Including the gates, the fort lost twenty percent of its facilities. We suffered serious casualties, but, the pressing problem is the Silhouette Knights being just one step away from being wiped out." Summarising the report submitted to him, Knut couldn't help sighing after confirming the losses suffered at the fort. The fort was in danger of falling after just one night. ... Thieves. I don't know who their allegiance is to, but, damn... but, we were careless, too... From what Knut knew, Fremmevira Kingdom had never suffered attacks from Silhouette Knights for the past century. Aside from there being nothing to gain from this, the natural barrier of Aubigne Mountain made it difficult for other countries to attack. Politically wise, the Kingdom was stable and there were no signs of revolt, allowing all the territories to invest in anti-Demon beast defence. In this incident, the lack of experience was a serious flaw leading to self-destruction. The schemes of men were more terrifying than Demon beasts sometimes. Compared to the lesson learnt, the price they had to pay was heavy. Molten knocked and entered the room. After saluting in

silence, he skipped the opening greetings and got straight to the point: “Pardon me, Sir. Regarding the new models... out of the five that were taken, four had been recovered, but, one of them shook off our pursuit and we lost track of it.” “... It escaped?” “During our pursuit, the Laihiala cadets joined in because of various reasons... But, something strange happened along the way.” Knut told him to go on with his gaze. “Demon beasts. Because of a swarm of Demon beasts appearing along the escape route of the thief, we had to give up on the pursuit.” Another frown was added to Knut’s face. It’s nothing special for Demon beasts to appear, but, the timing of it showing up was too coincidental, and blocked the advance of the pursuing party? The Demon beasts might move as they pleased, but, that was normally part of their usual routine. Knut could sniff the scent of someone having a hand in this. “I thought it was suspicious and investigated it thoroughly...” Molten’s face which was known for being courageous had something bitter mixed in, including despise, anger and contempt. He said in a tone full of disdain: “In the place where the Demon beasts showed up... I found remnants of a ‘curse bait’.” In that instant, Knut, who was quietly thinking about the content of the report, opened his eyes wide from shock and anger. ‘Curse bait’ was a lure made from special medicine made for the purpose of attracting Demon beasts. It works by emitting a scent which the Demon beasts like, able to gather the Demon beasts nearby when used. But, the Demon beasts that congregated would be agitated and become more aggressive. Hearing this, Knut stood up, knocking his chair backwards. “Preposterous... curse bait!? It was used merely to ‘escape’!? Are they insane!! If that is true... No, as expected...” The consequences of using that in the Fremmevira Kingdom were clear. It would create an epidemic of Demon beasts in the region, and was a great taboo in the Fremmevira Kingdom. Its production method was obviously heavily classified. Not just production, even possession could be punishable by death. Aside from legal issues, it was not acceptable rationally and emotionally by the masses. With the Demon beasts’ periodic attacks, both the Knights and civilians had to fight day and night in this nation. Doing something here would naturally be infuriating to the people, which exposed the origin of the thieves. “I am thinking, could the thieves be from another nation...” Knut nodded; he was thinking the same thing as Molten. Setting the issue with the curse bait aside, he couldn’t think of any reason anyone within the Kingdom would plot this incident. Knut had been considering this possibility for a long time, and, this new clue became the last piece of the puzzle. He pondered for a moment. This incident had serious implications, he needed to tidy up the situation and clear all his doubts. “... Molten, do what you can to gather information in the vicinity. There is no need to rush with the restoration of the fort. I have to report to His Majesty myself... I will be rushing to Känkänen. Prepare the carriage!”

Knights & Magic - Volume 2 - Chapter 18

The season moved into deep autumn in the blink of an eye, the chill in the air grew stronger with each passing day. The bone chilling breeze was blowing today, too, only the bright and cheery sunlight from the clear skies delayed the onset of winter. This was an infirmary situated within Laihiala Pilot Academy. On the only bed within the room, Edgar slowly opened his eyes. This was a clean and bare room. The sunlight shining in at an angle pierced through the lacy curtain and into the room, giving his cheeks some warmth, gently stimulating his slightly opened eyes. He had slept for quite a long time, so, he couldn't concentrate immediately and his sight lacked focus. His view was covered by a white fog, before everything gradually became clear. At the same time, Edgar recalled the situation before he lost consciousness, and struggled to get up in confusion. "Ugh..." Aches from all over his body were registered by his brain, stemming off Edgar's thought of getting up. Within his confused mind, Edgar compared his current situation with what he last remembered. These were injuries from an intense collision and bruises from the machine parts that were sent flying. His life wasn't in danger, but it wasn't just a light wound. He relaxed after judging so, and rested his body onto the bed. The pain prevented him from sleeping, so, he just laid there in silence. At this moment, he heard a cautious knock on the door. Edgar attempted to answer, but the dryness of his throat deprived him of his voice. He managed to grunt, but, the door opened before he sounded out. "...! You are awake!" The woman who entered — Helvi stared with widened eyes, jogging to the bed Edgar was lying on. In her hands, was a jug of water. "Great... You have been sleeping for three days, I was so worried." Teardrops were glistening at the corner of her eyes. Edgar was surprised by the words 'three days'. He wanted to express his apology and gratitude, but, only a hoarse sound came out of his mouth. Helvi, who noticed this slowly, slotted a straw into Edgar's mouth, with the other end inside the jug. After moisturising his throat, Edgar relaxed and asked with his hoarse voice: "... Sorry, Helvi. After that... After I lost conscious, what happened...?" Even at this juncture, Edgar was still so serious. Helvi shrugged and pulled a chair over to sit. "Alright, I will explain everything to you. There is time, so, don't be hasty." After taking a sip herself, Helvi tilted her head and said: "Well, first of all..." In the Imperial Capital of Fremmevira, Känkänen; in Castle Shreiber situated at its heart, there were several figures along the corridors to the audience hall of the palace. One of them was the King of Fremmevira, Ambrosius Tahvo Fremmevira. An elderly reigning Head of State, he was once a Knight in his youth, and has experience as a Field Commander. He had carried on with his training since those days and was strong and healthy. His majestic hair and beard were like a lion's mane; his presence was as strong as before, permeating into the surroundings. A few steps behind him, was Duke Knut Dixgard. Compared to the King, he was slender and gave the impression of a sharp blade. But, right now, his face was shrouded in fatigue and anxiety, dulling his usual glint. "So, thieves broke into Fort Casadesus through their

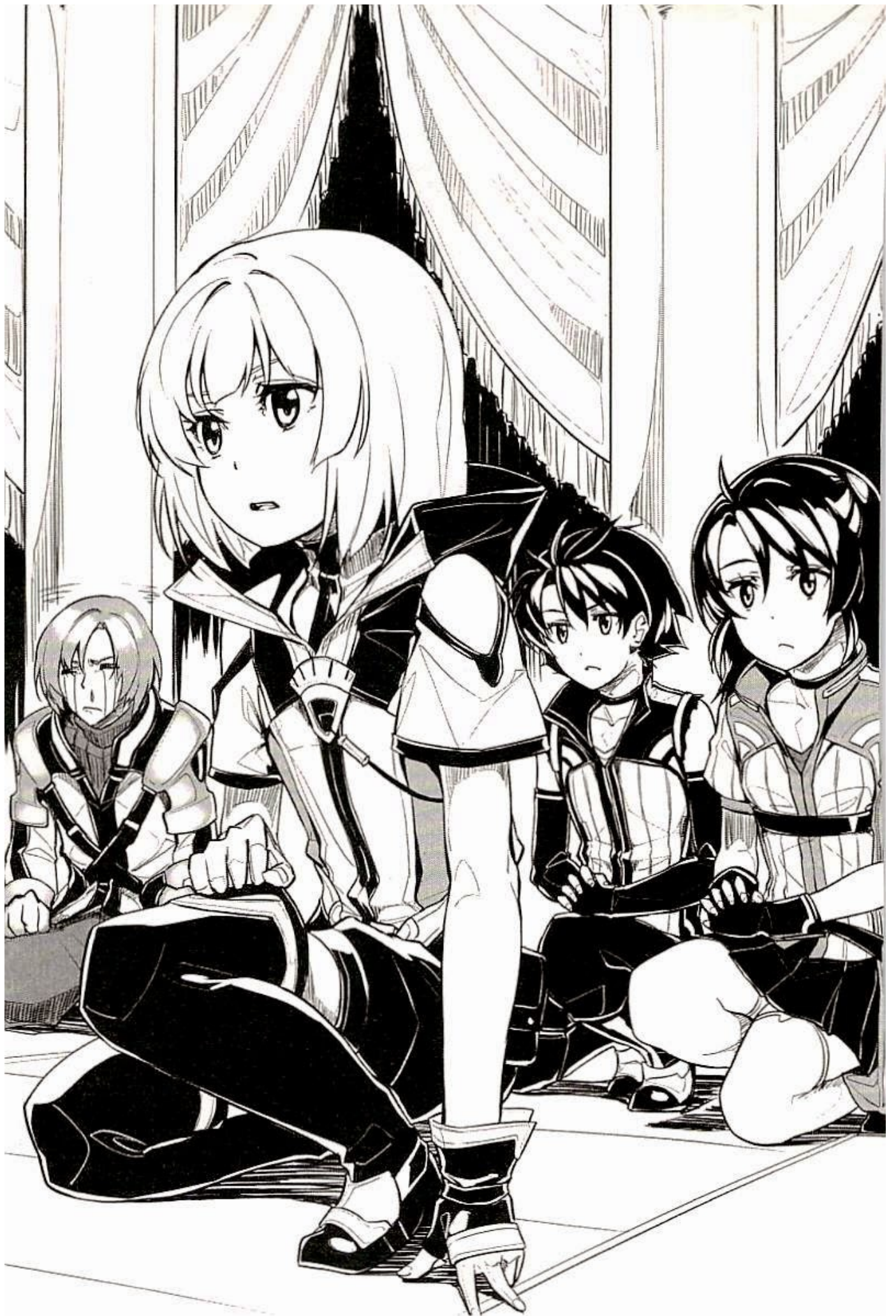
schemes, and took the new model of the Silhouette Knights by force, is that right?” “Yes. We have recovered most of the new model Silhouette Knights, but one of them got away. We have put up notice everywhere and are combing the grounds, but, nothing has turned up so far. It was my grave negligence; I have no words to defend myself. I am prepared to bear any punishment...” “Knut, don’t be hasty. Instead of punishing you, I have more important things for you to do. If you want to take responsibility, put more effort into your work in the future and think about how to make up for it.” With how serious Knut was, if the two of them weren’t walking, he would have already prostrated himself on the spot. But, facing Knut’s confession, Ambrosius waved and dismissed it. “You strongly suspect the real identity of the thieves... to be personnel from foreign nations?” “Yes, I believe it to be so. We are interrogating the thieves we captured for intelligence. But, they appear to have special training and are keeping their mouth shut. It will take some time to determine their true identity.” “No matter what, we won’t need to be hasty as long as the thieves stay within our borders. It’s just a matter of time before we get them. Otherwise, their escape route would be limited to the Bocuse Sea of Trees or hiking up the mountain range. It is easy to deduce where they will go.” ‘Bocuse Sea of trees’. This forest was situated to the east of Fremmevira, and a realm that played host to countless Demon beasts. The recent attack of the Behemoth was still fresh in everyone’s mind, there might be a Demon beast stronger than that out there. Judging from that, it was easy to imagine how foolish it would be to seek refuge there. On the other hand, the west of Fremmevira was populated by nations of humans— ‘western countries’. Going that way would require hiking up Mount Aubigne. The mountain range had always been known for its treacherous terrain, but, it wasn’t impassable. There were several easy passages built into the roads, with garrisons set up. The problem was the alternate routes through the mountains. It might be difficult for regular travel, but it was possible to traverse through it, and the thieves might have prearranged such a route. There were no radars in this world. The surveillance effort of the mountains wasn’t just for show, but, there were gaps in the security which Ambrosius was aware of. “Really, things are getting serious. It has been a long time since we had diplomatic talks with foreign nations.” The reason why the Kingdom could survive with its national borders in such a battered state was because of its geographical location. Situated between the Bocuse Sea of Trees and the Aubigne Mountain Range, Fremmevira could be described as a ‘city wall’. For the western countries, the existence of this Kingdom was convenient and beneficial to them, solving problematic issues which would had troubled them otherwise. That was why they wouldn’t do unnecessary things and risk souring their relationship. The nations came to a similar consensus to not intervene in any way, and has a ‘turn a blind eye’ historical background with Fremmevira. That was the main reason why the Kingdom was relaxed in their security against the other nations. “The next generation model of the Silhouette Knights were stolen. Once this has been revealed to the world, it would be impossible to keep it from spreading to the other nations. It’s too late to worry about that. We have to defend our mean of survival.” And, in order to carve a path into the future. Both men were thinking about the same thing. The audience hall of Castle Shreiber was spacious. This was natural as it was built to host Silhouette Knights within it. When a ceremony was held here, tidy rows of Silhouette Knights would line up at the side, displaying the majesty of the Kingdom. Right now, the group inside the hall wasn’t Silhouette Knights, but a group of young adults. Simply put, they were the students from the pilot faculty of Laihiala Academy, and three children. After resolving the

incident in Fort Casadesus, the ones staying in Laihiala had also been summoned, gathering almost all of the students in the pilot faculty. The students stayed in this spacious hall, awed by the serious atmosphere as they waited for the imminent arrival of the King. “Good, you may rise.” Ambrosius looked at group kneeling before him and did away with the pleasantries with a casual tone. He then sat onto the throne gracefully. The Laihiala students lifted their heads, but, they were so nervous that their body grew stiff. This was natural since they were already tense in the presence of a Duke. A petite boy stood at the centre of the front row and seemed indifferent. Ambrosius smiled the moment he glanced at Ernesti. The next instance, his face turned serious, and said with a voice filled with dignity. “First of all, I must congratulate all the students present for successfully developing a new machine model, well done. For a group still at school to accomplish an unheard of achievement, I feel proud and happy.” Ambrosius’ words made most of the student blush from excitement. Some of them even looked shocked. “Regrettably, there are ruffians disrupting this great work. We have done all we could to capture them, but there has not been any news, yet. We have prepared for the worst and assume the ruffians have escaped.” The expressions of the students turned gloomy. They were overjoyed by the praises of His Majesty, but the cold reality pulled them back to reality. “There is no need to be upset. They might have stolen one machine, but that doesn’t mean they have taken everything related to the new model from us. But, with the news of this machine made public, there will be conflict between nations over this new model. When that happens, we can’t afford to fall behind! From what I know, the new model had yet to be perfected. The reason I have summoned everyone here is to make it so. Without further ado, Ernesti. What do you need to perfect the new models?” Eru thought for a moment, after hearing the King’s question and asked. “There are two problems; one of them would take quite a while no matter what. The other problem... requires the assistance of the NTR Lab.” Eru’s answer differed wildly from the guesses of most of the people present. They thought that Eru himself, or Eru and the students would complete the new model’s development. Ambrosius just wanted to know what he would need in order to accomplish that. But, Eru’s answer wasn’t facilities or materials, but the name of an organisation. “There are many issues that need to be resolved for the new models, one of which is ease of control. The NTR Lab is experienced in this aspect; I think it would be most efficient to borrow their expertise. Also, if we are planning to adopt the new model as the base unit for Silhouette Knights, the production method would be very important from here on. Hence, the best way is to use the Karrdator which is the most populous model as a springboard and upgrade them. To achieve this, it would be best to rope in the NTR Lab, who are the most familiar with Karrdators.” Eru had prepared these answers beforehand and presented everything fluently. In contrast, Ambrosius was a little disappointed and crossed his arms. “So, you are saying that future development should be transferred to the NTR Lab?” “I know this alone won’t solve the problem. We have to explain the details carefully to the NTR Lab. But, there is already progress for that. Thanks to the recommendation of Duke Dixgard, all my senpais present would definitely have a place in the NTR Lab. Every one of them is a member who took part in the research and development of Tellestarle from the beginning to the end; they will definitely see the new model into completion.” Ambrosius squinted his eyes and stroked his beard. This boy had given much thought. As Ambrosius thought about this, something seemed to be out of place. His instinct told him he had missed something. In order to recall what that

was, his eyes fell on the boy once again, and he got his answer. “Yes, you have a point. As you have suggested, I will summon the NTR Lab to discuss this. For the completion of the new model, I am looking forward to your performance from now on... But, why wasn’t your name mentioned in your proposal earlier?” “Yes, Your Majesty. I will soon be in the second year of middle school; I won’t be graduating so soon.” At this moment the two thoughts of ‘Why are you bringing this up this late in the game’ and ‘Oh, that’s right’ flashed through the minds of everyone present. Even Ambrosius couldn’t conceal the surprise on his face. “... As the King, it might be inappropriate for me to say this. But, at this point, do you even need to study at school?” When they heard this, Chid and Ady, who were behind Eru trembled. If the King ordered Eru to stop going to school, they wouldn’t have any way of preventing that from happening. The words that made them rush to Casadesus swelled towards their throat, but, wouldn’t come out. The two of them could only hang their heads with their fists clenched and listen quietly. The two of them didn’t notice that Eru glanced back at them. “There is... a reason. Your Majesty, the reason I could work on the ‘new model’ project and finish it, was because of extremely good luck.” Whenever the petite Eru spoke to Ambrosius, he had to look upwards. Ambrosius could see the shining determination in the boy’s eyes staring straight at him. He smiled and replied: “Oh, so, you mean this incredible achievement wasn’t because of your own talent, but, simply great luck?” “As you know, I am just twelve years old. No matter what ideas or methods I could think of, if there is no one to acknowledge it, I wouldn’t have accomplished anything. This achievement was thanks to the senpais in the pilot faculty for not treating my words as a joke, and taking it seriously. I don’t think there are many who would do the same for me.” “Your work is outstanding; I can’t just dismiss it so simply. And, if I were to give the order, I don’t think the NTR Lab would ignore my words. If that was the case, wouldn’t the condition be similar?” Eru lowered his gaze and shook his head slowly. “That would cause unnecessary friction. The new model will become the centre of attention and would require long hours to research and develop. If unnecessary elements are mixed in, things that could have been done might become impossible.” These words were right on the mark on what Ambrosius was worried about. The National Technological Robotics Laboratory was set up right after the founding of Fremmevira Kingdom. The organisation’s long years of research supported the development of all technology related to Silhouette Knights. The researchers were exceptionally talented and had a high level of pride. The pride of men was a troublesome thing, no matter how talented one was, or what their accomplishment was, it doesn’t mean the Lab could accommodate him. Especially with such a huge age gap, the problem of sending Eru there was obvious. With Eru’s talent and his matured way of handling things, such minor issues wouldn’t set him back; that was how Ambrosius felt. He also thought the friction could be reduced by giving some ‘insurance’ to the students. After considering the potential problems, forcibly assigning Eru into the NTR Lab had more cons than pros. And, as Eru said, at the end of the day, It would be hard to say if the task could be finished at the NTR lab. For the ‘final adjustments’, it would be impossible to accomplish it without the NTR Lab’s expertise. And, the finished product would be presented to the world by the NTR Lab, which would preserve their pride, a great way of resolving the problem; except for one thing. Ambrosius thought about that one thing and frowned deeply. Seeing Ambrosius’ troubled face, Eru smiled immediately. “Please be at ease, I have not forgotten about the promise I made with Your Majesty. I would not give up on

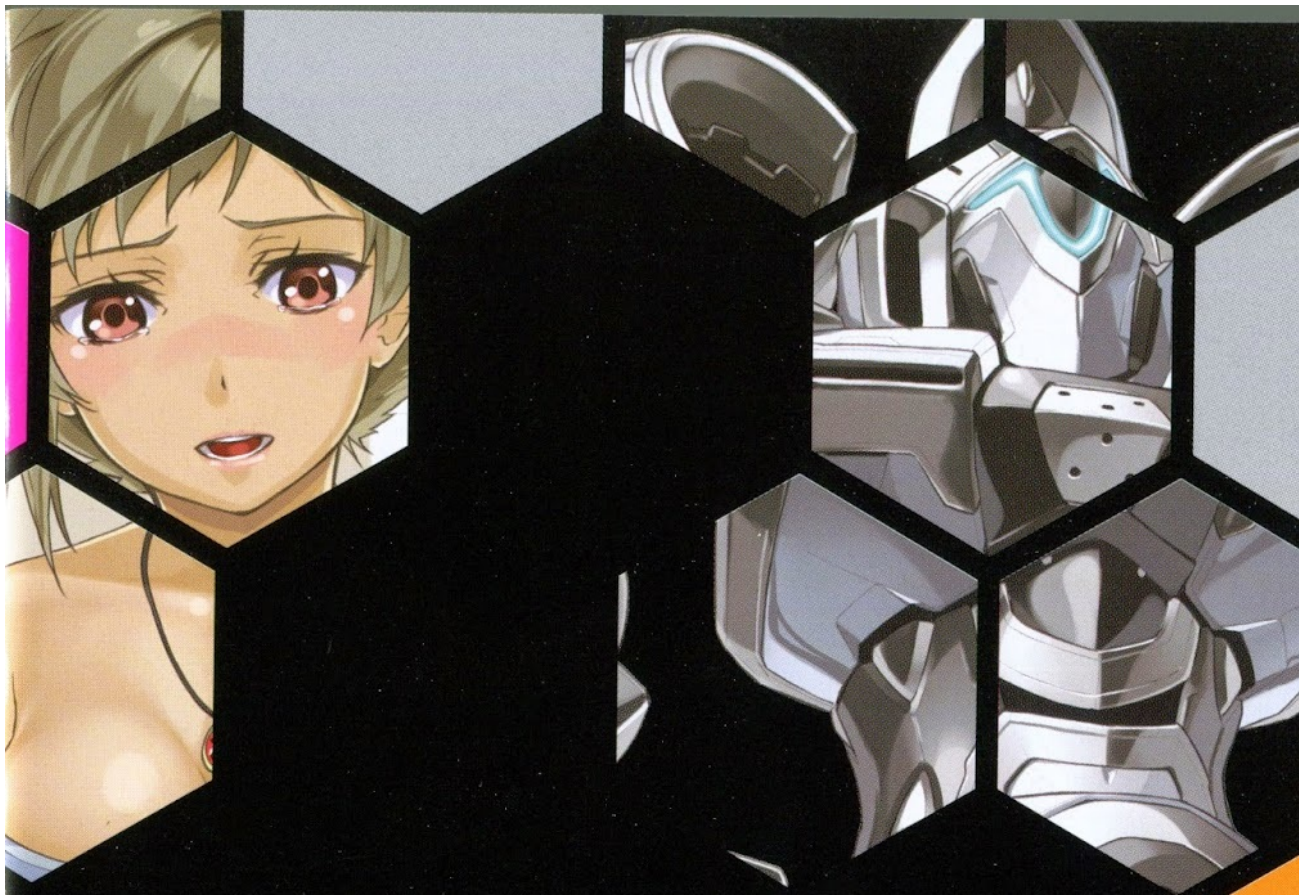
my goal to make the best Silhouette Knight ever. Hence... I will complete the next machine design before I graduate, please look forward to it.” “... Wait, you are still doing that?” Everyone in the hall heard the illusionary sound of people falling over like dominoes. Some of those present were literally holding their heads with a bitter smile. “As the saying goes, slow and steady wins the race. This time, I will plan carefully and think of a unique and perfect design!” “No, that’s not the problem here!” Knut who was standing by the side scratched his forehead and mumbled: “...He is talking about that...” Ambrosius glanced at him and suppressed his urge to laugh. “The completion of the new model is important... But, doesn’t everyone want to design newer machines?” Eru looked as if he was being willful, but everyone understood— This guy was just leaving the problematic finishing touches to others. Ambrosius couldn’t bear it any longer. Being with this boy made Ambrosius feel like he was reverting to his old self. His blood of a prankster was squirming. “I see, as expected of a hobbyist. The NTR Lab would be motivated by a project on such a grand scale. Their expertise is guaranteed, they will definitely produce great results.” Ambrosius laughed for a while, and, then reverted to his serious expression. “Is this fine? I might tap into their expertise when making the next model, too, alright?” “The development of Tellestarle was just an experiment. Thanks to that, I learned all sorts of knowledge and gain much experience. The end product has the potential to be the basis for future development. But, the mass production model that Fremmevira seeks is one that is flawless and has multi-utility. But, the machines I am planning to design doesn’t match these two criterias.” Ambrosius ignored Knut, who stood stunned in place. The boy, who rewrote the development history of Silhouette Knights because of his ‘hobby’, was taking it to the ‘next phase’. Ambrosius was concerned because of his curiosity and the impact of Eru’s actions. Eru made history with just a ‘test’, what should be Ambrosius’ focus for the ‘next phase’, the completion of the mass produced models or...? And, moving on to the ‘next phase’ would be dependent on this boy. The NTR Lab might be a capable organisation, but, they could not provide such a dramatic technological leap. Just from this point, it was clear what the answer should be. The problem was how to do that. Suddenly, inspiration struck Ambrosius like a comet. Ambrosius sat up, with a scheme in mind. “I can agree with your reasoning, but I cannot approve of this.” Knut saw from Ambrosius’ profile the nightmare that haunted him in the past. “I cannot allow you to do as you please as a student. There is no need to wait for the construction of the next machine model, get it done as soon as you can and show it to me.” Only Eru could hear the faint sigh that came from behind him. Even though Eru couldn’t do anything about it, he couldn’t trample the willful wishes of his childhood friends like this. As Eru was thinking of a scheme under the guise of his innocent face, Ambrosius continued: “By the way Knut, since Ernesti expressed his interest in creating Silhouette Knights, his safety will be a concern.” “Yes, Your Majesty.” “My safety? What is the problem?” “Let’s see. The villains targeted the ‘actual product’ this time, but, if something like this happens again, there is no telling whether the source of this whole incident— you, would be in danger. You might develop another new machine. If they keep targeting generations after generations of machines, the enemies would feel that there is no end to this and take drastic actions. That’s why we have to ensure your personal safety.” “We should assign him some guards.” “That means what you need would be blacksmiths to bring life to your ideas, and Knights who can protect your life.” Ambrosius relaxed his serious face which seemed to be a farce, and smiled without worries. “And, these people

must accommodate you without a hint of prejudice. Do you have any idea who could fulfill these conditions, Ernesti? Well? The answer is obvious, there's nothing to consider." For a short moment, Ernesti Echevarria stood wide eyed on the spot in surprise. He moved moments later, turning to look behind him. As expected, all the students in the Laihiala pilot faculty focused their gazes on him. Even Dietrich and David were looking at him with warm eyes. The silence that contained a multitude of emotions fell between them. "That's right; the students of Laihiala. Everyone has experience in making the new model. I am looking forward to your performance once again. I hereby order the raising of a new Order of Knights. The members include Ernesti, and the ones who craft and pilot the Silhouette Knights alongside you!" "An Order of Knights... Us?" Eru, who was always smiling could feel the corners of his mouth cramping. In contrast, the smile on Ambrosius' face was getting deeper. "Since the Order of Knights has been raised, we have to name it. The scale isn't big, so we shouldn't assign it the colour blue? No, because of your duties, it should be a different category. Oh, the familiar 'silver' is a good fit. Am I right, Ernesti? Next, I will bestow everyone with the name of 'Phoenix'. The 'Silver Phoenix Knights'; that would be the title all of you will go by." This name spread out like a ripple with the mumbling of everyone present. Moments later, it had permeated into the minds of everyone—the 'former' students of Laihiala pilot faculty and Ernesti's group. "Ah, this is a Knight Order, but, it would take time to prepare a suitable place to set up base. There is a need for a temporary base in the meantime. Knut, is there anywhere that is suitable?" "Yes. Everyone here is related to the Laihiala Pilot Academy. Since most of them are students, how about housing them on campus for now?" "Hmm, a great plan. A place would be prepared by the time Ernesti graduates, so please don't worry about that." Eru had no objections to this arrangement, and wanted to cheer loudly. But, that aside, Eru still felt a bit unhappy. That's right; this was just an emotional issue. No matter how wonderful this proposal was, Eru still wanted to fight back a little to show his dissatisfaction. "But, Your Majesty, wouldn't this get in the way of handing the development issues to the NTR Lab?" Eru brought this up casually, but this was still a potential problem. This was what Ambrosius was concerned about in the first place.



“Oh, yes, we need to solve this problem. Well, then, I will issue the first command to the Silver Phoenix Knights. ‘Give a solid blow to the arrogant noses of the researchers in the NTR Lab’. Show me how you will use the new Silhouette Knights to scare them out of their wits; teach them that age is just a trivial matter and tame them... Can you do that?” Eru turned to the back again. He could see determination in their eyes. Seeing them nodding silently, Eru made up his mind. “By your command... I will do all that I can to accomplish this mission.” “... And that’s what happened.” Before they realised, the sunlight was coming in at a steep angle, the glaring sunset was shining into the infirmary. After Helvi finished the story, she took a sip of water and rested. Edgar was listening with a serious face all this while, but, when the story became weird, his expression turned into a stiff smile. The words ‘I just heard a ridiculous story’ was written on his face. “I want to confirm something. That Silver Phoenix Knights thing... does it include me?” Was he afraid of being enlisted, or looking forward to it? Anyway, it was hard to tell from his stiff expression. “Yes, but, it’s not mandatory; you can choose to turn down this appointment. There are no negative consequences for rejecting this appointment; you can still join any Knight Order after you graduate.” “... By the way, did anyone quit, yet?” Edgar already knew the answer, but, he couldn’t help asking. Helvi squinted her almond eyes that were similar to a cat, smiling happily as she gave the answer that had Edgar expected. “None, not one person has turned it down.” After hearing this answer, Edgar smiled wryly and rested his entire body onto the bed. For a moment, the two of them were silent. Edgar suddenly recalled something important he saw before losing conscious. His expression turned serious, after finding the right words, he brought up this matter: “... Helvi, I have something to tell you.” Seeing Helvi continue smiling with her head tilted, Edgar chewed on his words, but, didn’t stop and finished his sentence. “It’s about Tellestarle. The machine I fought, the one that got away... It was ‘prototype one’. That is your...” Edgar couldn’t say any more; because Helvi’s finger was pressing on his lips. “I know. I checked the other new models.” Helvi lowered her gaze, considering her ties with ‘prototype one’, her reaction was unexpectedly calm. But, Edgar could see some hint on how she really felt. This was enough for Edgar to make up his mind. “I see. Helvi, I promise you.” Helvi raised her head. Edgar held her hands tightly. “One day, Earlecumber and I will get it back, or destroy it completely. I won’t let the thieves trample on our hard work, and your partner.” Edgar’s determined words surprised Helvi. She blinked her eyes blankly and then smiled. “Yes, I will look forward to that... Thank you.” She held Edgar’s hands as she replied softly.

End



騎士&魔法²

Knight's & Magic

INTRODUCTION

超脫常軌

這個故事的主角——**艾爾涅斯帝**

那不侷限於常識的行動獲得許多人的喜愛。

在第二集中，艾爾依然故我。

他毫無顧忌的行動不只驚動學園，更發展為震撼國家的大事件。

很多大人被迫奉陪12歲少年「只是興趣」的突發奇想。

可是，那卻大大超出興趣的範圍，引發**國家層級的大問題**。

這列名為艾爾的失控列車究竟會衝向何方？他的去向令人移不開眼光。

沒錯，他的存在本身也許就是「**超脫常軌**」的。



Knights & Magic - Volume 3 - Chapter

Prologue

He didn't know how long it had been.

When he realised it, 'Ernesti Echevarria' found himself floating in darkness.

The dark barren space seemed to be endless, his pale white skin and brilliant silvery purple hair was a strong contrast against the background.

He couldn't feel the ground beneath his feet, only a sensation like floating in water.

It was strange, but, he wasn't bothered by it, or interested in this situation. He simply stared into the other end of space with a blank expression.

Finally, something other than him appeared in this stagnant space.

It was a rectangular box printed with colours. On closer inspection, it had a picture of a 'robot' in a cool pose on it, and the 'logo' displayed the name of the robot on the side. The box was labeled with a detailed 'description' on four of the sides— indicating that this was a box containing a 'plastic model'.

And, there were more than one.

All sorts of boxes were chained together, encircling Eru. He was familiar with all the robots depicted on the boxes and would never forget them— He bought all of them right before the 'traffic accident'.

"Aahhh... That's right, these are the 'yet to assemble' ones. It's a rare chance, I have to complete them."

Ignoring why the things he had lost were here, he didn't even care why 'boxes of plastic models' were before 'Ernesti'. He smiled calmly and acted as he usually did.

Holding clippers in his hand, he placed a cutting mat, box cutter, tweezers, file, and glue tidily before him.

This was a habit he had in the 'past', placing his tools and model pieces tidily before assembling it in earnest. It was like a ritual and was a part of his routine.

Eru, who had finished the preparations, was in a great mood as he reached out for a box floating in the air.

Opening the box, taking out the model parts, and starting to read the instruction manual.

This was a time of happiness as he immersed himself in his hobby, but, for unknown reasons, the box moved unexpectedly and dodged his hand. He tried several times, but, couldn't touch any of the boxes, and they seemed to be drifting further and further away, about to disappear into the darkness of the abyss.

"Hmmm? Please wait, I haven't done anything yet. There are so many I have 'yet to assemble', I want to keep assembling!!"

He gave chase, but, whenever he was about to touch them, the boxes slipped away.

The frustrated Eru started getting serious. The clippers in his hand started to morph into the gunstaff, 'Winchester'.

Mana and script flowed into his beloved staff, manifesting into physical phenomenon through the catalyst crystal. 'Aero Thrust'— The air pressure created from the magical explosion propelled Eru's body forward like a bullet, reaching speeds that surpassed that of any normal man. However, he still couldn't reach the boxes. The boxes shook at a place just beyond his reach, mocking his efforts.

"Don't even think of running... I won't let you get away! My, my plastic models!"

Just a bit more and he could touch them. Eru pounced at the boxes.

He finally grabbed it into his arms, holding it tightly and refusing to let go.

'The box of plastic models' should be something made from thick cardboard.

But, the sensation in his arms felt so familiar, a tenderness that wasn't too hard or too soft.

For the first time, his mind was filled with doubt and he lifted his head like a spring—

— And, he woke up from his dream.

His sleepiness was gone in an instant.

Eru blinked his eyes and sighed deeply. His mind was clear, but, his mood was terrible.

“... It was a ‘dream’. To stop at such a place... Even if it was a dream, at least let me do it until the very end.”

Light shone through the thin curtains and the room gradually grew brighter. It was morning, even though recalling the dream that was becoming vague made him upset; he still prepared to get up from bed out of habit.

At this moment, he realised that something was right before him, and he was being pressed down.

It was too close so he thought it was a blanket. But, looking at it closely, he realised it wasn't ‘something’, but ‘someone’.

Eru slightly lifted his head and recognised who it was. The one hugging Eru in her sleep was the girl who grew up alongside him— ‘Adeltrud Olter’. He understood why the dream ended.

“... Ahh, right, we slept together last night.”

He was confused momentarily, but, remembered the reason in no time.

It happened last night.

He was pulled into a certain incident a few days ago, and Ady was unhappy at being left out.

And, so, she announced that she would punish Eru ‘like a pillow’. So she snuggled into his bed and executed the punishment.

Ady was sleeping soundly without a care in the world, wearing a satisfied expression. Her face looked so happy that Eru hesitated to wake her up.

If he hadn’t been rendered immobile by her tight embrace, he might have let her continue sleeping.

“Ady, it’s morning, wake up.”

It couldn’t be helped since he couldn’t move, so Eru shook Ady’s shoulders to wake her up. A moment later, she opened her eyes in a daze— then smiled brilliantly and hugged Eru tighter.

“... Hmmm... It’s Eru... Fufu, so warm, so happy...”

Winter is the time when one longs for the warmth of the bed, and the young boy whose size was just right for hugging provided great warmth.

“Time to get up Ady; don’t keep sleeping just because it’s cold.”

“... Just, three more hours...”

There seemed to be no end to this. She rubbed her cheek against Eru’s hair, smiling happily as she dozed off into dreamland once again.

Saying this verbally was useless, so, Eru gave up and adopted drastic measures. He moved his hand under her clothes and used gentle and cautious motions to tickle her flanks and back. Ady, slept for a while, but moved involuntarily in no time, waving her limbs about.

“.....!!! Fu, hya!? Wait, stop, it tickles, Eru, stop!!”

After struggling for some time, Ady finally suppressed Eru’s hands, stopping further attacks. She maintained this position and lowered her gaze, meeting Eru’s, who was smiling gently in the eyes. She blushed and moaned in tears:

“Eru~! Boo, hoo, you are becoming mean recently...!”

“No such thing. Good morning, you are finally awake. Come, it is a beautiful morning, let’s get up from bed.”

He then pulled the reluctant Ady up.

She looked displeased with the cool breeze. In contrast, Eru was stretching his limbs and swinging his arms for some reason.

“Now is not the time to lose to the cold. Here, let’s begin the activities of the ‘Silver Phoenix Knights’. I couldn’t do it in my dream, but I won’t give up this time!”

“...? Aren’t you unusually excited after forming the Knights Order?”

Seeing Eru full of drive made Ady tilt her head, baffled, but, she still complied with his urgings and left the bed.

“That’s right, models are dreams... A dream that is beyond reach, so I have to make a ‘substitute’... I won’t give up so easily!”

It had been a long time since he dreamed about his previous life.

It gave Eru a weird goal— which was like putting the cart before the horse.

For the time being, it will be a while before his ideas that go beyond the boundaries of worlds take shape.

“Please wait for me, my robots!”

In conclusion, he was full of life today as well.

Knights & Magic - Volume 3 - Chapter 19

This happened on a certain clear, winter day.

“Well, has the ‘Silver Phoenix Knights’ left for Laihiala, yet?” The tenth King of the ‘Fremmevira Kingdom’—‘Ambrosius Tahvo Fremmevira’—rested his elbow on the throne as he muttered. He was fifty-seven years old, a very old man in this world, but was lively and youthful in demeanour. However, he was melancholic right now. “Yes, the carriage ferrying them has set off this morning, they should reach the academy city by evening.” The one conversing with Ambrose was Duke Knut, or ‘Knut Dixgard’. In the audience room of Castle Shreiber situated within the Capital of Fremmevira, there were several others present besides the two of them. “Yes, we will need their talent; there has been quite a number of troubling matters recently.” What was troubling Ambrosius was the recent series of incidents that hit the Kingdom of Fremmevira. ‘C.E. 1277’, this year had been the most tumultuous in the founding of the Fremmevira Kingdom. What sparked it off was the battalion level Demon beast, ‘Behemoth’ that caused a large scale catastrophe—known as the ‘Behemoth Incident’. That incident resulted in the sacrifice of numerous ‘Silhouette Knights’ and pilots and destroyed a part of the national defence line against the ‘Bocuse Sea of Trees’. Just half a year later, before the Kingdom recovered from this disaster, it suffered another attack. Near the garrison situated to the north of the Kingdom, in the Duchy of Dixgard, Fort Casadesus was assaulted by unknown villains. It so happened that the new model of Knights developed after the ‘Behemoth Incident’, ‘Silhouette Knight Tellestarle’, was situated there, and the ‘Red Rabbit Knights’ garrisoned there fought back valiantly. After an intense battle, the fort caught fire and the Knights suffered heavy casualties, including the new models. This was seen as something that happened because of the Behemoth Incident, and was dubbed the ‘Casadesus Incident’. “... As for those ‘villains’, I don’t know where they came from, but they made loads of trouble for us. To think we, the barrier for the ‘nations of the west’, have to watch our back. It seems the western nations have forgotten the reason why they are safe from the Demon beasts, those ingrates.” Ambrosius didn’t conceal the displeasure on his face, because the Casadesus Incident was much more problematic than the Behemoth Incident. The culprit behind the Behemoth Incident was a ‘Demon beast’—the beasts couldn’t be reasoned with and were something akin to a natural calamity. On the contrary, the masterminds behind the Casadesus Incident were rational ‘humans’. The Kingdom of Fremmevira was the only nation of men on the east side of the ‘Zetterlund Continent’. This nation acted the role of a shield for the western nations, keeping them safe from the invasions of the calamity known as Demon beasts. That was why it didn’t take part in the wars between humans for several centuries. The Casadesus Incident, which pulled them into the strife between men, placed doubt upon the reason for the existence of the Fremmevira Kingdom. “If it has come to this, we can’t just sit back and wait. Besides,

they took a prototype machine.” The goal of the villains attacking Casadesus was to capture the newly completed prototype. For unknown reasons, that group had their eyes on the Silhouette Knights that were more powerful than the previous generation’s. And after a fierce battle, they had successfully stolen one machine away. “It is a pity, but it is too late to recapture that machine. What we need to do now is set our sights forward, and move on. However, there is something we need to do before that.” Ambrosius looked at the group that was waiting behind Knut. “We need to get the ‘bug’ in the body out. The ‘enemy agent’ who stole the intelligence related to the prototype should be hiding somewhere, right now, in our country... Now is the time for you to shine, ‘Blue Hawk Knights’.” When they heard this, the people behind Knut raised their heads. This group known as the ‘Blue Hawk Knights’ didn’t have impressive mail or even leather armour. They were dressed like normal citizens. It was strange for such a group to be addressed as an ‘Order of Knights’. “Yes! Despite having only D beasts as enemies for a long time, our ‘skills’ have not dulled with time. We will present results to you as soon as we can.” A man in the middle of the Knights answered on behalf of the group. That man had an ordinary appearance with no special features to speak of. The group included young women, old men; all of them seemed to be ‘ordinary’ pedestrians that could blend right into a crowd. They only had one common feature. Their eyes seemed to glint from time to time, and they had a sharp gaze that could see through anything. Ambrosius, satisfied with their answer, nodded, and turned to Knut. “Good. Well then, Knut, I will hand the command of the Blue Hawk Knights to you. Do not forget about the failure last time and succeed this time for me to see.” “... Thank you, Your Majesty, I will definitely capture all of the villains.” Knut bowed deeply; a sharp light could be vaguely seen from his lowered gaze. The incident was dubbed Casadesus, and Fort Casadesus was situated within his duchy. Furthermore, he had held great expectations for the prototypes that were destroyed. The Casadesus Incident was a slap in the face, no wonder he hated the villains to the bone. Like Ambrosius said, this mission not only gave him a chance to restore his honour, it would also allow him to vent his wrath and display his merciless means, famous within Fremmevira. Ambrose was pleased with Knut’s response and his facial expression relaxed. “I look forward to the performance from all of you. Let’s leave that as it is for now; this concerns that ‘mischievous lad’, after all. Since I gave him an Order of Knights, he will show his true nature sooner or later. For things to proceed smoothly, we need to send someone who knows what is happening to follow him... Right, Knut?” Knut who kept his fiery rage from showing earlier showed a stiffened face. He wondered what that ‘mad dreamer’ would do; he was more dangerous than the villains in some ways. “...Yes, please leave them to me, too. I will arrange for them to work under the perfect conditions.” Even though it was dangerous, they had to do it. To wipe away the shame of Casadesus, the ‘results’ of the Silver Phoenix Knights were needed. The prototype that was smuggled out of the nation, and the terrorists that were inside the country; Fremmevira was in an unstable situation. They needed to unite together to face the biggest test since the founding of the nation centuries ago. While the Capital was having a conference that could shape the future of the nation, the Silver Phoenix Knights were— “Hey— I can see Laihiala. We are finally back.” The man on the horse said casually. Right now, everyone was moving on a carriage. The group was heading in the direction of one of the cities at the foot of Mount Aubigne— the city walls surrounding ‘Laihiala Academy City’ gradually became visible. It was home to the largest educational institute in the Fremmevira Kingdom —‘Laihiala

Pilot Academy’ — the home base of the Silver Phoenix Knights, which was comprised of students. They finally reached the academy city, sighing in relief when they passed through the main gate. After experiencing the construction of the prototypes, getting dragged into the Casadesus Incident, and the formation of the Silver Phoenix Knights, everyone was highly tense. For these students, this was a heavy burden. The carriage headed towards Laihiala Pilot Academy, and the group was dismissed on campus. Most of the students stayed in the dormitory on campus, but there were local students as well like Ernesti and his childhood playmates — the twins, Archid and Adeltrud. The three of them walked side by side towards the Echevarria residence. “Oh—it has been so long since the last time we saw Eru’s home! Ah~ that was tiring!” “Yup, I want to rest properly at home for a while.” They couldn’t help cheering after reaching the doorsteps. Eru’s mother, ‘Celestina Echevarria’, rushed out the moment she heard their voices and hugged Eru. Eru also hugged his mother gently. “I’m home, Mum.” “Welcome home, Eru. Are you hurt? No? That’s a relief. How was it? Are they happy with the Silhouette Knights everyone made?” “Yes, they loved it! There were some slight ‘failures’, so it broke down, but they want us to build more.” “Ara, that’s great. I will work hard for dinner tonight, so you can have a good meal and work hard.” “Yay, I will look forward to it!” While mother and son embraced each other, their dialogue was a mess. When Eru’s father saw this scene, he felt at ease, but couldn’t help sighing. The sun set behind Mount Aubigne and the thick curtain of nightfall covered the entire Laihiala Academy City. Dinner that night was shared between the Echevarria and Olter families, who were close. The mothers from the two families displayed their culinary skills, filling the table with sumptuous dishes like a carnival. In no time, the dining table radiated a noisy and cheerful mood. The group chatted about everything, and most of the food was consumed by the stomachs of the children in short order. The children who were official ‘Knights’ had great appetites. Both mothers smiled happily when they saw their children’s satisfied faces, and started clearing away the empty dishes. After finishing the meal, everyone was resting. Eru went before his father, Mathias and grandfather, Lauri. “I have something to tell you, Dad, Grandpa. His Majesty has appointed me as the Commander of an Order of Knights.” That was the opening sentence; Eru’s sudden words made his Dad and Grandpa spit out and choke on their tea simultaneously. The children, who were expecting their reaction, stayed well out of range. “Cough! Cough, E-eru.... What was your appointment again!?” “The Commander of a Knight Order. To be specific, the Commander of the newly raised Silver Phoenix Knights.” The smiling Eru looked at the stiff Mathias and the dumbfounded Lauri, who was nursing his temple. Chid and Ady watched the entire scene as bystanders. “... Is, is that so? That’s great news, right? But what are you going to do about school? Since you are going to be a Commander of a Knight Order, are you dropping out of school?” Mathias who took some time to shake off his stiff condition was thinking about this point. ‘Dropping out of school’ wasn’t surprising. Even though most of the people within the nation could go to school, not everyone could complete the entire course. As the students could decide the length and form of schooling depending on their family situation, there were plenty of people who only studied in primary school and didn’t progress to middle school. Those who had to drop out because of work were considered fortunate. Although dropping out because one was appointed the Commander of a Knight Order was definitely unusual. “No, by the grace of His Majesty, my Silver Phoenix Knights will be based in Laihiala. The Order is also special in nature, so, even though I am

currently the Commander, I will still be a student until graduation.” “Eru... I did say I would support you in anything, but this is a bit...” ‘A Knight Commander studying at the Academy as a student’— this would definitely be the most unique title of all time. Mathias’ head began to ache even though he didn’t drink any liqueur. “And so, I don’t need to move even though I am a Knight Commander. It is embarrassing to say this, but the Silver Phoenix Knights will use the facilities of the piloting faculty as its base. I think His Majesty will issue the official Order in a few days.” “Wha, what... Eru, you even took over the Academy...” Lauri gazed towards the sky; he could almost see the brilliant smile of his old friend on the other side of the clouds. It seemed that his old friend was reverting back to his playful-self after meeting this grandchild of his. Their actions combined were beyond his imaginations. He had already resolved himself that this might happen someday, but he didn’t expected it to be so fast. Lauri finally recovered from his shock. He straightened his face, which had an expression of pride he had, as the leader of an institute and as an educator. “... Even if I have to accommodate you, there are things I would not back down from as the principal of Laihiala. Eru, there will be new students entering the piloting faculty next year. If the Silver Phoenix Knights uses the school facilities, where would the new students go? I can’t accept this even if this is the order from His Majesty.” Lauri stared sternly at Eru, who sat properly and replied with a nod: “Of course, the Silver Phoenix Knights won’t rob my incoming sempais of their place to study. To be frank, the purpose of the Silver Phoenix Knights is to ‘create Silhouette Knights the world has never seen before’, just like the Tellestarle. To do so, we will be developing new techniques in the future, too.” As he listened to the smiling Eru’s reply, Lauri couldn’t help breaking out in a cold sweat. This group had already created the technological breakthrough of the generation, Tellestarle. If they formed an Order of Knights and researched officially, how far could they soar? That was something Lauri couldn’t imagine. “That’s why we want to pass these techniques to our seniors and juniors in the piloting faculty. It is already a given that our Tellestarle will affect the future development of machines greatly, so, the seniors won’t lose out from learning these techniques.” This country was changing widely with Eru and the Silver Phoenix Knights at its centre. This overly huge historical torrent made Lauri afraid, but his face looked calm and fresh as if the bitterness from before was not real. “Eh, if everyone can work together, it won’t be a bad thing.” “Yes, let’s work hard together! It will definitely be interesting!” Eru’s smile was so brilliant that it was hard to open your eyes. Several days later, the existence of the Silver Phoenix Knights was officially made known to the Academy by decree of King Ambrosius. This was the start of the huge wave of change washing over the life on campus. It had been half a month since the Silver Phoenix Knights set up base at Laihiala Pilot Academy. The pilot faculty students gathered at the familiar school workshop. They had received the official appointment from the King, and were now members of the Silver Phoenix Knights. However, the only thing that changed was their title. Their life on campus proceeded like normal; no wonder the reality of the situation faded gradually over time. “Ara... All of a sudden, we are Knights of an Order; it seems funny when you think about it.” The ‘Boss’, David Hepken said with mixed feelings. Edgar C. Blanche shook his head. “Boss, you were there when it happened, I was roped in while lying on a hospital bed.” “You looked so anxious, worrying whether you would be selected or not.” “No way, well, probably...” Helvi Öberg smiled deviously. Edgar’s actions became awkward with her teasing. “Eh, it was just getting interesting working on the new models. It’s a shame to end it like this,

accompanying our Knight Commander isn't so bad." Dietrich Cunitz shrugged. The Boss realised something and clapped his hands. "Yah, since the silver boy is the Commander and we are normal members, should we watch the way we address him? Like Young Master Commander or something?" "Guess we should. Maybe Classmate Commander?" "Too casual. We are an Order of Knights after all; we should call him Knight Commander at the very least." "No, no, we should respectfully address him as Sir Knight Commander." Before they knew it, the members started joking about Eru. The Silver Phoenix Knights was a strange Order with the youngest Commander ever. Considering the reason and goal of its formation, its discipline was more lax than regular Knight Orders. It was raised hastily after all. "... I don't like such weird titles. It feels uncomfortable, just address me as usual. It will make me happier." At this moment, the Knight Commander himself appeared. And of course, he was wearing a tired expression. "Putting that aside, it's great that everyone is here. I have with me the first mission of the Silver Phoenix Knights." "You are rushing us off to work now? You are always like this, so impatient." Eru pointed behind him where heavy footsteps and the grinding of metal could be heard. The source of the noise was revealed in no time. What appeared behind him was the two and a half tall mobile armoured suit—the Silhouette gear. "Oh? Isn't that the toy you made? What do you want to do with that... Hmm? Hey, could the one controlling it be..." The Boss' voice became surprised mid sentence. Everyone present knew how the Silhouette gear performed wondrously during the Casadesus Incident. However, they also knew the flaw with the Silhouette gear. As it required a large amount of mana to control it, only a handful with exceptional talent—referring to Eru and the twins—could operate it normally. But the face of the one piloting the Silhouette gear was Eru's childhood playmate—the Dwarf boy, Batson. "That Bat boy isn't proficient in using magic like you, right? How did he do it? Tell me." Even though Batson had played with Eru since a young age, he was just a craftsman and lacked powerful magic abilities. "Fufufu, this is the result of the enhancement made by me and Batson! Batson, please handle the explanation." When he heard that, Batson took a step forward and knocked the chest plate of the Silhouette gear in delight. "Alright. The previous Motor Beat model could only be piloted by someone like Eru. But this 'Motor Rad' is different. A miniature sized Magius Engine is installed inside! As you can all see, even a magic novice like me can operate it!" No one understood Silhouette gears better than Batson, he knew every nook and cranny, even the Boss had to acknowledge that. "Ohh! That's interesting; you mentioned a miniature Magius Engine? Where did you get that?" "We asked Duke Dixgard for it, and he got one for us." Eru made it sound simple, but the Boss simply sighed. The secrecy level of the Magius Engine wasn't as high as the Ether Reactor, but information related to it was still classified from the general public. Eru was provided with it just because he asked, showing the high expectations they had for the Silver Phoenix Knights. It was a fact that they were part of the organisation, but the Boss wasn't ready to accept that just yet. "Fufufu, the important part is this. If Batson can pilot it, it means the Boss and the others, all of the craftsmen can do it, too." The Boss squinted his eyes and considered his words carefully. He understood the main point in no time. This Silhouette gear, which could exert a large amount of power as just one machine, was very valuable. The craftsmen had to work with giant humanoid weapons ten metres in height—the Silhouette Knights. Every component was huge and required a lot of manpower to handle, along with various equipment like cranes and tractors. With the Silhouette gear, they could handle the spare

parts with fewer people and cut down on their burden drastically. “I see, this is getting interesting! Alright, Bat boy, we will make more Silhouette gears, come give me a hand.” “Yeah, leave it to me! I am also a member of the Silver Phoenix Knights! I will work hard!” Batson thumped his chest and agreed. And so, the Silhouette gear ‘Motor Rad’ took the first step in becoming the working gear of the craftsmen. It didn’t take long for the Silver Phoenix Knights to rely on the Silhouette gears so much, that they couldn’t craft anything without them. As expected, the Silhouette gears performed marvelously in handling large spare parts. Not just that, either out of convenience or from laziness, the craftsmen did their work directly while piloting the Silhouette gears without getting in or out of it, using it in a way even Eru hadn’t imagined. The teachers in the piloting faculty were shocked by the revolutionary crafting techniques adopted by the Silver Phoenix Knights. In the end, this technique didn’t only affect Knight engineering. It was adopted in all sorts of fields. Since it affected the largest education institute in Fremmevira, Laihiala Pilot Academy, it was only a matter of time before it spread nationwide. From this moment on, the Laihiala Pilot Academy—no, the education system of this Kingdom—had a revolutionary change. The source of the revolution, the Silver Phoenix Knights, was quietly, but surely getting stronger. The Mountain Range Aubigne divided the Zetterlund Continent in two, with the royal Capital Känkänen at its core. Other large cities such as Laihiala Academy City made up the entire Kingdom. This ‘West Fremmevira Highway’ was the beginning of it all, the cradle from which the nation was born. If one was to travel south from these large cities by carriage for several days, one would reach a city far from the populous areas, a fortress city hidden in the thick forest known as ‘Dufaure’.

Känkänen and Laihiala were protected by city walls, a necessary defence in the nation surrounded by Demon beasts. Most towns above a certain scale would have defensive walls as well. Dufaure was the same, but for some reason, its walls were much tougher than normal. Its structure was very unique as well with sparse residential buildings and more than half the city occupied by one single facility. Its scale was even larger than Laihiala Pilot Academy. The impenetrable walls and the city centred on a giant facility. This was the reason why Dufaure was known as a fortress city. The true identity of this large facility was the ‘National Technological Robotics Laboratory’—or NTR Lab—a research and development centre. The NTR Lab was the Fremmevira Kingdom’s one and only large Silhouette Knight research institute. They were responsible for collating all of the technologies related to the Silhouette Knights and building new models. In the long history since the founding of the nation, they had worked long and hard on their research. The Silhouette Knights requires centuries to develop, so it not only served as a research facility, but also a manufacturing plantation. This vast development workshop had all sorts of equipment and loads of experimental prototypes. Because of its long history, large amounts of miscellaneous items were piled all over and could only be described as messy. However, machine nerds would definitely jump with glee if they saw this. Inside messy workshop number one, a large group of craftsmen were completing a certain task. They surrounded four Silhouette Knights with shoddy appearances, its design differing from the mass produced model Karrdator. Were these the prototypes they were designing? That wasn’t so. This group was doing the opposite of constructing and repairs, they were taking these Silhouette Knights apart. “How did they do this... Even the way the Crystal tissues are connected is different; do they have to strengthen it this much?” “Is this a small arm... To remove something like this after adding it in, unbelievable.” These machines that were

disassembled were already damaged significantly before they worked on them, some of them critically destroyed. The machines were named 'Tellesstarle'—they fell into the hands of the villains during the Casadesus Incident and had to be destroyed. Logically speaking, they should prioritise repairing them, but the 'original creators', the Silver Phoenix Knights', had already progressed to the next stage like an unreigned horse. These machines were, thus, left behind. In the end, it was decided that they should be given to the NTR Lab for research rather than scrapping them. "Hmm, I wish we could have disassembled them while they were in perfect condition." The craftsmen looked like kids, who had found a new toy, immersed in the job at hand. Every time they tore down a spare part or found a new structure, it would spark off a theoretical debate regarding the mystery of Tellesstarle. And of course, they didn't let their hands idle while doing so. The machine Tellesstarle used the knowledge and concept Eru brought from the alternate world, known as 'Earth', and didn't have anything in common with this world. The mysterious machine that seemed to have fallen from the heavens spurred the curiosity of the craftsmen. They carefully disassembled every spare part that made up the giant machine, greedily making this technology their own. Despite the passion of the craftsmen, the process of disassembling the giant by normal means progressed slowly. The problem lies in the 'vast differences in technology'. They couldn't understand the strange design and concept that ran contrary to current models and could spend an entire day discussing it. If the 'design plans' that came with the machines were missing, their progress might have been stalled indefinitely. A new figure appeared in the room full of passionate and determined craftsmen. The person was short in stature with a stout body, his facial expression hidden behind his wrinkles. The carefully braided hair and beard was taller than he was. His eye-catching appearance made it clear he was an elderly Dwarf. "Workshop Chief Gaizka..." The craftsman who greeted him had a little bitterness mixed in his face. Workshop Chief 'Gaizka Johannsson'—He was in charge of Workshop number one, the direct supervisor of all of the craftsmen. "You all sure took your time... Is the work finished?" The hoarse voice that sounded like the friction of rusty tools sent a chill down the backs of the craftsmen. The group stopped what they were doing as one and looked at each other awkwardly before saying hesitantly: "We found some interesting parts. Chief, this machine has a structure not seen in current models, so we need more time to complete our investigation. This is a treasure trove. The more we investigate, the more discoveries we make. If they didn't give us the design plans, who knows how much effort it would take to research this. For example..." When he noticed his subordinate's bad habit of rambling on when he becomes too engrossed, Gaizka waved his hand to cut him off. "I see... so how much do you all understand? And is it useful?" After Gaizka asked that, the craftsman shut his mouth, as if all his rambling never even happened. From their reaction, it was easy to tell there wasn't any good news. Gaizka narrowed his eyes that were covered in wrinkles. "Eh, like I said, the concept is too different... we could emulate it, but I think we need more time to understand it." The craftsman didn't continue as he could see the rising anger in Gaizka's eyes. "... You mean the proud technicians of the NTR Lab couldn't grasp the things made by mere students?" "That's not it... we already made progress. For example, the way the Crystal tissue is used increases its power and is more efficient." The craftsman's answer didn't satisfy Gaizka and his expression remained stern. The craftsman was already breaking out in a cold sweat, and he felt like running away when he remembered what he needed to report to Gaizka. "Actually, Chief... There are a few

problems..." He said timidly. Gaizka's expression eased. "We can settle the structure part soon... But there are other problems. The Magius Engine seems to be modified drastically; even the scripting engineers can't grasp the entire thing with all their effort..." "What did you say... Even if they did rewrite the Magius Engine, we can reverse engineer it based on the machine functions, right?" "We have the design plans, but after looking at the content... We have no idea how they controlled this function..." Gaizka raised the corner of his eye and the faces of the craftsmen turned as white as a sheet. "You lot listen up, His Majesty ordered us to develop an entirely new model... an entirely new model! This is the biggest project of the past century!! Once this plan is realised, we will leave our names in history. How can all of you panic at the very first stage!?" Even though they wanted to explain, they couldn't produce the results to prove it. The craftsmen who were trapped between the wrath of their Boss and reality were soaked in cold sweat, with no signs that the situation might improve. What saved them from this impossible dilemma were the words of a third party. "Hey, Gaizka, they will drop their hammers in fright if you scare them like that." Both sides reacted dramatically when they heard this. Gaizka turned back instantly while the craftsmen smiled in relief. "Ara, Director Olver... to think you would come here even though you always complain that your body is getting rusty being glued to the chair all day. What brings you here?" Olver Blomdahl was the head of the NTR Lab, the director of the entire facility. He had a youthful appearance, wearing a loose robe with a tall and had a skinny build contrasting deeply with the Dwarf Gaizka. He wore a bright coloured bandana on his head, and the most prominent thing was the slit-like eyes of his. Gaizka wasn't expecting him to come and surprise flashed across his face momentarily. But he concealed that by clicking his tongue before anyone noticed. "I am here to take a look at the new model, of course. To create an entire new model from scratch was something that has never happened, since the founding of the nation. I want to listen to a proper briefing, so I made some time to visit. Everyone, this might be a direct order from His Majesty, but rushing it won't do. Progressing slowly is fine; the most important thing is to do the job right." The craftsmen practically showed their acknowledgement and returned to their work stations before anyone stopped them. Shortly after, only the bitter faced Gaizka and Olver were left. "Director, you are making things hard for me. Overseeing the workshop and craftsmen is the authority of the workshop Chief. Bypassing me and giving out orders makes it hard to do my job." "Oh, you are right, but I think it's not good to rush. That's why I advised them out of goodwill." "I understand your position, director, but don't worry... I will take my leave; I have other places to inspect." Gaizka left quickly. Olver watched him leave and shrugged. "Really, Gaizka is so stubborn... He is capable, but too inflexible. The most important issue in any task is to know your limits, especially in a situation that is obviously a test for us." Olver was genuinely curious about the new models, but he had another reason for visiting. He heard the rumours of a new Knight Order being founded, and that group had created the first new model in the past hundred years. "... It is unbelievable, but His Majesty formed a research workshop that is not part of the NTR Lab and gathered the personnel to develop a new model. On the other hand, we are obviously falling behind." In the ruckus of the disassembly operation, no one heard his murmurs. He didn't mean it to be heard by others, anyway. "Is he testing us? Or... giving us a strong dose of motivation? To think His Majesty is so cheeky, he probably meant to do both. Forming a separate organisation and making us 'compete'... Am I over thinking this? No matter what, I have to keep my eyes

open. Even if we ‘hear it clearly’, there is only so much we can understand.” His mutterings were drowned out by the noise and disappeared with the wind. “Brat... acting so arrogantly because His Majesty likes you... I will show you.” Gaizka cursed as he took crude strides forward. Anger that was different from what he felt when listening to the report of the craftsmen was welling up. His sunken eyes were burning with wrath as he glared at the wreckage of the Tellestarle with his murderous gaze. “The next generation mass production model... Yes, if I complete this, my name will be in the history books, I won’t need to see that brat’s arrogant face, ever...!” He resolved himself with a heavy heart full of anger and an ominous smile on his lips. In order to realise his ambition, he shouted at his useless subordinates again.

Knights & Magic - Volume 3 - Chapter 20

The new year had just passed into the deep winter, and, it began to snow at the foot of Mount Aubigne. It wasn't freezing cold, but, the city was still covered in white, enough to deter people from going out. The few people who were out in the streets wore thick coats, walking briskly in the face of the strong winds. Strangely, there was a group of Knights walking in the middle of the wide road, braving the chilling breeze. They were no ordinary Knights, but, giants taller than a three-storey building—Silhouette Knights. The residents watched this scene curiously from the houses lining on either side of the road. Why were they here? In this era, devoid of entertainment, this small matter set off a huge wave. Matters that involved a group of giants would be the topic of interest after meals for quite a while. The Knights' destination was the origin of this city's name — Laihiala Pilot Academy. In the workshop of the pilot faculty, the noise of hammers rang as usual. However, it was made by huge hammers even dwarves couldn't wield. And, the ones holding them were not people but the Silhouette Gear 'Motor Rad'. The shape of the Motor Rad had changed drastically within this period of time. It was based on the combat model, 'Model Beat', after all, so, using it for menial work would be too wasteful. Since everyone was using it greedily, due to convenience, leading to a huge increase in the demand. Hence, the designs were simplified to expedite production. The changes to the torso were really prominent with all of the armour removed. Only a frame dubbed the 'iron fence' protected the user. The defence was literally non-existent, but the advantage was that the heat wouldn't accumulate, so it received rave reviews in crafting works. "Hmmm—this is a problem." The Silver Phoenix Knights that appeared to be sailing smoothly had a problem surfacing from its back. "That's right... Half of them were destroyed during the Behemoth Incident and modified into Tellestarles after repairs... and, it broke again." Helvi, who was standing beside Eru, sighed as Eru held his chin, deep in thought. The commissioning of the Silhouette gears was smooth, but the Silver Phoenix Knights didn't progress much these past few months because of their remaining stock of Silhouette Knights. Frankly speaking, it wasn't enough. The Silhouette Knights were shared between the Silver Phoenix Knights and the pilot faculty. Originally, the academy possessed twenty training machines. Some of them were destroyed in the Behemoth Incident, and they only have the repaired Guyale and the remaining ten machines left. "If we mess with the last ten, the pilot faculty won't be able to function next year. I'm hesitating to touch them." Everyone expressed their agreement after listening to the Boss' complaints. The Silver Phoenix Knights existed to develop new Silhouette Knights, but, they needed resources to do so. The major incidents that hit them consecutively drained their resources, although, the large amounts of Silhouette gears they made was part of the reason. "Urghh, I even used my time during class to think of things we need to do, it's infuriating that we can't take action right away." "No, Commander Classmate, you should take lessons seriously." Helvi reminded the strangely arrogant Eru. Dietrich

crossed his arms and seemed to remember something. “Hmm? Didn’t they say they would give us some machines in return? I think I heard that from someone.” “You are right, that was the plan. They would give us Karrdators in exchange for our Tellestarle... But, Duke Dixgard was the one who proposed that.” They were smart enough to understand with just that. After all, the Duchy of that Duke was where the Casadesus Incident happened. “... I see. No matter how powerful that Duke is, he won’t be able to arrange this so quickly. Okay, let’s do Silhouette gear operation training.” “Okay, I will continue to research and beef up the plans. During class.” “Why are you insisting on doing that during lessons?” As they were killing time this way, sounds of exhilaration could be heard outside the workshop. The group looked at each other and then checked outside. A group of students ignored the cold, running over the snow covered campus grounds. Words such as ‘School gate...’ “Group of Knights...” could be heard. Eru and the Boss realised something was wrong and dashed to the school gate. Laihiala Pilot Academy used Silhouette Knights during lessons and thus had a place to park them beside the school gate. It didn’t have much chance of being used, but, an army of giants was lined up there, right now. A group of bystanders braved the snow and watched them from afar. The giants formed up in neat rows, with one knee on the ground. All of them were the mass produced models of the Fremmevira Kingdom— Karrdators. They numbered twenty, equivalent to two squads. This was enough to garrison a small fortress. The heater function of the machines and the heat that was generated during operations caused steam to rise from the surface of the Karrdators. The lines of giant Knights displayed a majestic aura under the cover of fog. The audience gasped in admiration at the display. The pilots dismounting from the machines were handing down instructions to the infantry units of the group. Eru spotted a familiar face, and that person noticed Eru, who was making his way through the crowd. Moving his burly body, which was as big as a bear, the mouth covered by a thick beard smiled— this large man was the Commander of the Red Rabbit Knights, Molten Fredholm. It had been several months since the two last met during the Casadesus Incident. The moment Molten came before Eru, he straightened his face and back in a salute. “By the orders of Duke Dixgard, I am here to deliver two squads of Karrdators to the Silver Phoenix Knights. Please review the items, Knight Commander Echevarria.” “I acknowledge receipt of the items, Knight Commander Fredholm. Thank you for your hard work, do send my regards to the Duke.” The two of them greeted each other, but, they could only maintain their mask of formality for this long. The first to relax was Molten. Looking at the short boy who was keeping his back straight, he couldn’t help it any more and laughed. “Pu! Hahaha, you, you acted the part of ‘Knight Commander’ well, Ernesti.” “Eh— Commander Fredholm ... that’s too mean.” “Haha! Don’t stand on ceremony, call me Molten. Since we are both Knight Commanders, age aside, we are equals. In fact, you probably have a higher standing since you report directly to His Majesty while I am stationed at a fortress.” Eru smiled awkwardly, tilted his head and said: “Well then, regarding the receipt of the Karrdators...” “Ahh, we agreed to exchange this for the new models, right? We were delayed because of various troubles, but, I am here now as promised.” “The Red Rabbit Knights suffered serious damages after the Casadesus Incident. I am happy to accept this, but, is it okay for me to take this?”

After the baptism of the Casadesus Incident, the Red Rabbit Knights were nearly wiped out. Wouldn’t it be a huge burden on Duke Dixgard if Eru’s group took all of these Silhouette Knights? Seeing Eru’s troubled face, Molten gave him a hearty smile. “Don’t

worry; Knights from the other fortresses will fill in the gaps. Also, this is what the Duke said: ‘Others can garrison the fortress, but, only you can perform the task assigned to you. It’s easy to judge which side has the priority.’ “ Eru looked behind him at the Karrdators that were expelling steam from their air valves. The giants made from steel and crystal evoked many feelings within him. “... I understand the Duke’s intent. Please relay to him that I will do my best to not let him down.” “Good, I am looking forward to your results; maybe you can take a look at my Knight Commander machine next time!” Molten patted Eru’s head, and led the Red Rabbit Knights back to Casadesus after a short farewell. The twenty machines were controlled by the pilots to stow them away. In the past year, the pilots of the Silver Phoenix Knights experienced many things, but, piloting the official mass produced machines was a totally different experience. It was hectic as they moved them all into the workshop. The half empty workshop was filled with Silhouette Knights, once again. Being current models that were operated at the front lines, there was no better materials than this. “In all sorts of way, we can’t back out anymore. This is going to be troublesome.” “That might be so, but, why do you look so happy?” Standing before the lines of Karrdators, Eru was grinning from ear to ear. No matter how you looked at it, it was a devious expression. In a corner of the workshop was a small space boxed out by wooden boards. The members of the Silver Phoenix Knights were gathered in this area known as the ‘conference room’. They pulled out chairs and were seated casually, and the one standing in the front was, of course, the Knight Commander— Ernesti. “Everyone, let’s attack.” “Attack, where?” Chid looked amused, but, he couldn’t tell if his retorts reached Eru. Seeing Eru’s blushing and excited expression, everyone was thinking the same thing: It’s useless to say anything now. “I’m kidding. However, it is time for the Silver Phoenix Knights to fulfill their mission.” “Right, we took such a generous deposit already; we can’t give them shoddy works.” Everyone present nodded in acknowledgement. They were a group that was formed for ‘that’ purpose, no one denied on this point. “Our orders are— develop a machine that will ‘scare NTR Lab out of their wits’. It will be great if it has unique performance and functions, and is easily discerned by its appearance.” Eru opened the briefcase beside him and took out a stack of paper. He stuck the documents onto the blackboard in the conference room, and said: “Fufufu, I have a lot of great ideas! We faced many problems during the battle of Casadesus, and unfortunately, a Tellestarle got away. Why is that so? Someone was blocking us? The enemy resistance? No, ignoring all that, I feel the reason is because the speed of the Silhouette Knights is about the same. Right now, there are no machine that specialises in speed in this country. And, so, I plan to develop a new machine that will dominate in terms of speed!” “Oh, you mean we will be making a light model?” The speed of Silhouette Knights was largely dependent upon the weight of the machines. Silhouette Knights, which were modeled after humans, move by using their feet. The heavier the burden, the slower it would be; the lighter the weight, the faster it becomes, it was a simple logic. The quality of crystal tissues and the structure of the machine would affect the speed, but, they are mostly negligible. Hence, most people equate speed with light weight. “Have you all forgotten the example of Tellestarle? If you need something, you have to use the shape that corresponds with it. Even if you have to break out of the mold of the ‘humanoid shape’.” However, this ‘obvious logic’ only applied to the bipedal humans. In this world, there were many creatures that ran faster than humans. Eru had seen machine designs to the extreme in his past life, and used the best solution that fits this

problem that left the deepest impression on him. Eru took out the ‘design plans’ with the sketch of the machine— The members in the conference room saw the front view design first. The upper torso was plainer than they had expected, the balance was a bit strange but that was a small matter. The weird part was the lower body, which was as large as a separate machine. The thick powerful legs were supported by feet designed to support the movement and enormous weight of the machine. That wasn’t the strangest part; from the side view of the plans, they could see that it had ‘more than two legs’. Four of them, to be exact. Below the waist was another creature, something they were familiar with, the animal considered the friends of Knights— a horse. The design plan proposed by Eru had the upper torso of a human and the lower body of a horse, and was definitely a monster— half man, half horse. “... Well, will the Silver Phoenix Knights be specialising in creating weird machines?” After ten minutes of silence, the Boss finally squeezed out a comment that reflected what everyone felt. “It is weird... No... How should we describe this? What is that?” “A machine that is fast with a unique appearance.” “Eh? You are right, but... Eh?” Dietrich’s mind started falling into confusion. Eru’s answer was clear and simple in contrast. When the sub arms were added to Tellestarle, the craftsmen could hear the sound of their common sense crumbling. Right now, what they heard was the death throe after their common sense was knifed. Maybe they were used to it, or maybe they steeled themselves after joining the Silver Phoenix Knights— they accepted this design after feeling a bit troubled. “I think this will be enough to scare the NTR Lab out of their wits.” “Not just that, they might burst a vein and die of a heart attack. Taking a hundred paces back... no, a thousand, no, ten thousand, let’s say the horse is fine. But, why the upper torso!?” If they made a Silhouette Knight in the form of a horse, they wouldn’t resist that idea no matter how dumb it might be. There was no creature in this world that combines the body of a human with the lower body of a horse— Centaurs were mythical beings after all. To give life to a mythical being... Was Eru an artistic designer? This worried the craftsmen and sent a chill down their backs. “Why? Well... because, it’s cool!” **“““Is that really the reason!?”””** Everyone shouted in unison. Eru thought this reason was adequate and didn’t expect to be retorted by everyone present. He probably knew that wasn’t enough. Looking into the distance, he added: “Eh, apart from that, let me think... A horse shaped machine is weak in combat, so it is pointless even if it catches up. It is a hassle for another machine to ride it. So in order to be fast and combat worthy, I added the human upper torso. In conclusion, I want to design a Silhouette Knight that can emulate the functions of a Knight on horseback.” The craftsmen were relieved that Eru had a normal reason. Eru only failed to consider the common sense aspect of it, but, it wasn’t impractical. “Ah— I know what you are trying to say. Your concept should make sense, but let’s ignore that for now. Normal people wouldn’t install the torso onto a horse for that kind of reason...” The Boss and the craftsmen studied the remaining design plans, their hearts in a place between resignation and resolution. “From the design plans, you actually considered the structure seriously... Hey, this is a never seen before design, where did you get this from?” “The connecting part troubled me for quite a while, but the lower half is based on the bone structure of a horse.” Eru’s knowledge and experience came from him sneaking into the crafting faculty classes, his exceptionally studious attitude made him better than others, but, made others doubt where his ideas came from. His experience from designing Tellestarle was the main reason why his ability raised so much. That experience tied Eru’s knowledge and concept together. The weight

distribution that would affect balance, the inner skeleton that supports the entire structure. While referencing the structure of a real horse, he also considered the power output of the crystal tissue and reallocated it accordingly. The design even detailed the outer skin customised to perform its functions. “Eh... I am starting to think that making Tellestarle was so much cuter. Come on, coming up with such interesting and reckless ideas won’t give me time to put down my hammer.” The Boss sighed in resignation, making the face of a professional craftsman. He couldn’t help smiling wryly but didn’t object either. At this moment, Dietrich raised his hand humbly. “Building the machine should be left to the craftsmen, but, I am worried about something else... From the hard lesson we learn with Tellestarle. If this ‘horse’ is stolen, normal machines won’t be able to catch it, right? In that case, wouldn’t this be a bigger problem than last time?” As the person who experienced that first hand, Dietrich had a complicated expression. He didn’t plan on letting anyone steal his machine, but, wishing to avoid that just by being careful would be too naive. They had to consider the worst case scenario of being attacked a second time. If this machine gets stolen and they give chase, it would be like a man chasing a horse, doomed to fail from the start. “Don’t worry, Di-senpai, I made anti-theft measures. Anyway, let’s try this out first and work on the other machines if it goes smoothly.” Eru didn’t want history to repeat itself, either. Dietrich simply shrugged after hearing him reply so confidently. The craftsmen recovered from the shock of seeing the new model design and started working. They used all of their knowledge and experience to understand Eru’s design, reinforcing and editing it, forging out a rough shape. Seeing the group discussing it fervently, Eru looked satisfied. “Since we are making an entirely different model, it will take a lot of effort. We can just make one.” “... You seemed to be hinting at something.” Eru didn’t answer Edgar and deepened his smile. Edgar felt it would be terrifying to inquire further and averted his eyes. “Let’s leave that aside for now, I am very confident in this ‘horse’. But, we can’t relax with just one machine alright?” “Yes, I know what you mean... But, we are stretched really thin now, it’s impossible to do more no matter how good the Boss is, right?” Just thinking about the hellish scene last year was enough to make Helvi feel tired. Even if the production difficulty of the horse and Tellestarle were the same, they could still imagine how tough the days ahead would be. The Silver Phoenix Knights had limited manpower; the rest would need to be solved by the passage of time. “And, so, we will just make one new model that will take a lot of effort, as for the rest... I want to make ‘Option Works.’” Question marks appeared on top of Edgar’s and Helvi’s heads, when they heard the unfamiliar term. Eru didn’t explain and took out more design plans, which he handed to them. On them was a variety of armour combined together that covered the shoulder area of the Silhouette Knight. It looked like outer coat-like armour with some differences. Complicated structures could be seen within the armour plate. “I dub it ‘Flexible Coat’. Simply put, this is the shield version of the sub arm supporting the back weapon.” “Erm... Ernesti, this is a good idea, but, there is no point in the shield if it is not held firmly. The sub arm is too weak to provide enough defensive power.” “If that was all, you would be right. Think about this, to toughen the hardness of the Silhouette Knight, what needs to be done?” “Strengthening magic... so, that’s how it is.” Edgar seemed to have figured it out and looked at the designs again. The sub arms were weaker than normal arms; making up for the lack of strength with mana output was the concept of this equipment. “It will improve the defence capabilities, as for its weakness, it will increase

the mana drain while in operation.” “What an interesting idea. It will depend on the circumstances, but, it should be useful.” “That’s right. I want to try making several sets of this equipment and installing them. I will need you to test it out and provide feedback for this.” Edgar and the others nodded in agreement with wry smiles. The pilots would be busy in the coming days, too. Fulfilling the reason for its establishment, the Silver Phoenix Knights took action to allow Eru’s ideas to take shape. Building and controlling the ‘Centaur’ and ‘Choice Armament’ took all the manpower of the Knights. With everyone engaged, only Eru, who was satisfied after showing everything he had thought of, as well as his happy three friends, Chid, Ady, and Batson were left. “Yes, let us keep going like this. While everyone else is working hard, let us do what we can, too.” “Huh!? Eru, there’s more?” Ady asked with her eyes widened in surprise. Eru threw out a bunch of machine and equipment designs, and now he wanted to do more. She knew that was how reckless Ernesti was, but being this hyper made her go from being impressed to being dumbfounded. “Well, I did think about it, but there is a small problem.” “Again? The dark days of endless experiments are here—” Batson remembered the days of developing Motor Beat, portable bow cannon, and Anchor wire; tough, but, fun times. “Fufufu, leave it to me! Chid, Ady, what happens when we use ‘Air Compression’?” “What happens... We make it explode behind us?” “Yes, the magic makes use of the recoil from explosions. And, the problem is here; what happens if we use ‘Air Compression’ repeatedly?” “Eh— let me think, you will keep getting pushed and your speed will get very fast... right?” Ady tilted her head and imagined herself using ‘Air Compression’. “Yes, theoretically, it is possible to keep adding energy with recoil and keep accelerating. This not only applies to humans, but Silhouette Knights, too.” “Are you thinking of piloting a Silhouette Knight and keep on using ‘Air Compression’?” They knew Eru had the ability to construct tactical level magic scripts. From the flow of their conversation, it was easy to imagine making Silhouette Knights accelerate. However, Eru shook his head and said: “That would be an ‘incredible tale’, indeed. It would be tiring to keep casting magic strong enough to move Silhouette Knights.” “Eh, normal people won’t just dismiss it as tiring.” “Similar to the magic armaments, we will prepare the engravings at home, and then install that on the Silhouette Knights. With this, we can complete a ‘propeller’ that could move as long as there is mana supply.” “... Erm— that is true, theoretically—” After hearing the theory, Batson’s face stiffened, while he imagined the steps, processes, and effects. Even the twins looked as if they had just heard a horror story. “Batson aside, what do we do?” “The two of you are great with magic scripts, so let’s do the engravings together. I will borrow a Karrdator to test a few days later, we will need Batson, then.” The three friends looked at each other. Recalling Eru’s record of doing whatever he said, they agreed.

And, so, one new model machine, several new equipment, and a never seen before propeller was brought into ‘this world’ quietly.

Knights & Magic - Volume 3 - Chapter 21

The time flew by, and the winter enveloping the Fremmevira Kingdom ended as Spring arrived. Spring was the time of meetings and goodbyes. The students who finished their courses graduated while freshmen enrolled in their place. Some people advanced to the higher grade while others moved onto the next stage. The old and new students came and went, and others welcomed the new academic year with familiar faces. The academy was filled with excitement everywhere, and the pilot faculty also welcomed a fresh group of middle school graduates striving to be pilots or craftsmen. They were filled with hope and passion, oblivious to the fact that starting from this year, the pilot faculty would become the demon world where common sense was nonexistent. The Silhouette Knights, ‘Karrdator’, piloted by the instructors strode forward, shaking the earth with every step. The freshmen cadets and craftsmen cheered loudly when they saw this scene. For the longest time, the mass produced Karrdator had been the machine protecting the Kingdom from invaders and was well-known throughout the Kingdom, the term synonymous with the term Silhouette Knight. The new students thought with admiration: As expected of Laihiala, they have the current production model! They were trembling from excitement after coming into contact with these machines. The group’s destination was the workshop the Karrdators walked out from. The workshop looked the same as usual, filled with the heat of crafting, and the repair platform was full of seated Karrdators. At the production platform at the end of the workshop, the craftsmen were busy smithing steel and creating spare parts. The new students peered curiously at the place they were going to train, and tilted their heads curiously, their faces full of question marks. The craftsmen were creating spare parts— that was natural, it was a scene the manufacturing course students saw many times before. The strange thing was what the craftsmen were wearing, which looked like armour, no matter how they looked at it. It was obvious that armour was a defensive equipment, not something needed during crafting and was an unnecessary burden. Of course, the craftsmen weren’t wearing normal armour, but the Silhouette Gear, ‘Motor Rad’. It was commissioned at the end of last year, but the craftsmen were already proficient in controlling it, wielding hammers and knocking it loudly. When they saw this scene, the new students remembered an incident that happened last year. After all, the predecessor of Motor Rad— ‘Motor Beat’, was made not by a high school student but a middle school student. If they remembered correctly, the Silhouette gear should be impractical to use. To think it was mass produced and used in manufacturing works; that was unbelievable. “Oh, freshmen! You are all finally here!!” As the freshmen stared at the workshop, a greeting that rivaled the sound of the hammers rang out, scaring everyone. Before their eyes was a dwarf student— no, it should be ex-student— with the amazing title of the ‘Silver Phoenix Knights Captain Craftsman’, the Boss, David Hepken. He was short but had a strong and bulky body— the common features of Dwarves. With his arms honed through long periods of crafting work, David emitted an aura like a man crafted

from steel. His presence alone was enough to awe the students. “Haha! I have been waiting, the things that need to be done have been piling up, I look forward to all of your performances. I will train you well. You will be deployed soon, so, get your acts together!!” “Ahh, hey, Boss, that doesn’t sound caring at all. It sounds just like a threat.” The sudden speech by the Boss shocked the freshmen; the one lightened the mood with a sigh was Edgar, who was standing beside him. His blonde hair was trimmed short, and his well-worn leather armour suited him, making him look like a veteran. He might be young, but in the eyes of the freshmen, who were even younger, he appeared like a warrior of prestige. By the way, he had the post of ‘1st Squad Captain’ within the Silver Phoenix Knights that was made up of two squads. “Greetings freshmen, once again, I welcome you on behalf of the pilot faculty. I know you have many things you are unclear of, so I will make a simple explanation. From this year onwards, the facilities within the pilot faculty have been seconded to the special Knight Order reporting directly to the King— the ‘Silver Phoenix Knights’. Everyone here is a member. As for all of you, you are freshmen studying in the pilot faculty, but have also been appointed Knight cadets serving under the Silver Phoenix Knights. I hope everyone will remember this point.” This opening speech was too much, so the freshmen showed a silly expression at the same time, before erupting rowdily. It was too late; they finally realised the pilot faculty was totally different from the previous years. The ‘Knight Order reporting directly to the King’ was a shocking title, making them break out in cold sweat. The ordinary school life they imagined didn’t exist here, and the situation developed beyond their expectations. “Setting the Knight Order aside for now, you just need to act as usual and create Silhouette Knights. You will need to operate the Silhouette Gear sometimes and change the way you do things, so I hope you all work hard to adapt to this.” “After training on the job for a while, we will need your help in modifying the Karrdator, so prepare yourselves.” Everyone here were freshmen, and according to custom, they would gain experience by assisting their seniors before doing it themselves from the second year onwards. But the Boss and Edgar skipped several stages, and their situation was becoming direr with time. As if to deal a final blow to them, a bigger catastrophe appeared. “Ah, fresh... Senpais? You are here.” In this area full of steel and fire, something jarring appeared— A voice like a chime of a bird broke their trains of thought. The group looked around the area and saw a short young boy walking over, his silvery purple hair swaying in the wind. And of course, he was the Knight Commander of the Silver Phoenix Knights, Ernesti Echevarria. When they saw Eru, the surprised expressions of the freshmen started cramping up, and it wasn’t because they didn’t know this child. Or rather, they were surprised because almost everyone knew Eru, thinking, why are you here? It all started during the Behemoth Incident last year. To support the middle school Knight faculty students— which were most of the students in the first year of Pilot faculty— the ones who rushed to their rescue were Eru, Chid, and Ady. Even ignoring that, Eru was already famous in the pilot faculty; they knew it was him even though it was their first time seeing him. Edgar empathised with the freshmen from the bottom of his heart, he cleared his throat and spoke slowly in a cautionary tone: “There’s another important announcement, regarding the Silver Phoenix Knights I mentioned, the central figure who is serving as Knight Commander... is Ernesti Echevarria over here. I think everyone already knows him.” In the face of Eru who nodded in acknowledgement, the freshmen couldn’t keep up and became dumbstruck; their troubled faces even made the Boss pity them. Eru noticed the tension in the air and looked

at Edgar with an awkward smile. “Ah— I know everyone has much to ask, but we will begin officially tomorrow, that will be all for today.” The freshmen didn’t even hear Edgar’s closing words and only understood one thing. Their lives were going out of control. The Pilot faculty freshmen left gradually after receiving a huge blow on the first day, none of them could conceal their expression of fatigue. However, one of them took a different course of action. That person left the group covertly and walked back to the workshop while everyone was leaving. “... Knight Commander Echevarria.” Eru saw the slender and long shadow that reached the side of his feet and turned back. That person was wearing the Pilot faculty’s cadet leather armour, which was newly issued just like any other freshmen. But Eru knew her and nodded with a smile, saying to the Boss and Edgar who were walking ahead. “Sorry, could you go ahead first? I have something to discuss.” The Boss and Edgar glanced at each other, and walked back to the workshop. Eru and that freshman headed towards the empty conference room. “I never imagined that you, who is part of ‘Blue Hawk Knights’, would become a freshman in the Pilot faculty.” “There was already a plan to send the next ‘contact agent’, and there were other missions, so I was sent here this way.” Eru looked at the girl who was taller than him, with an expression of comprehension. This person was Nora Frykberg. Like Eru said, she was a Knight serving under the Blue Hawk Knights. Blue Hawk Knights— this name wasn’t made known to the general public. None of the Knight Orders stationed within the Kingdom went by the name Blue Hawk. They don’t have a base, and their identity would be what was known as ‘spies’. Very few people knew of their existence, King Ambrosius was probably the only person who knew about them completely. As for Eru, aside from the contact agent Nora that was introduced to him, he knew nothing else about the organisation. This member of the spy organisation joined the freshmen group because of the mission she was tasked with. “You came to report because there has been some progress?” Nora flicked her hair, that wasn’t too long or too short, and nodded without expression. She then said monotonously: “I will first report the ‘investigation’ conducted several days ago. We have completed the re-investigation of the background of the members of the Silver Phoenix Knights and staff of Laihiala Pilot Academy and found several people with suspicious backgrounds.” Around the time when the Silver Phoenix Knights were formed, King Ambrosius issued an order to the Blue Hawk Knights— ‘thoroughly investigate Laihiala Pilot Academy’. With the full support of a certain Duke, the Knights started a swift check of the place the villains were most likely hiding, and accomplished their goal. “... According to the report, the intelligence about the prototype was leaked by a foreign agent that infiltrated in before the incident happened.” “As I suspected. I can’t think of any other alternatives. That agent hasn’t been here recently, which means the academy had been infiltrated by foreign agents for a long time.” Nora smiled and nodded in agreement. “My humble guess is that the enemy sends in agents periodically. According to the reports, we found graduates that disappeared every year.” The academy enrolled a large amount of students every year, so they could only do the bare minimum for background checks. As long as the students were keen to learn, they would not be expelled, allowing them to learn the latest knowledge with minimum effort. Eru smiled wryly in his heart, certain that their investigation must be absolutely thorough. Nora did not comment on the report itself and continued: “These suspects have all been ‘dealt with’; we have determined their contact methods as well. The Casadesus Incident dealt a major blow to the enemy as well. Using this chance, we are conducting a nationwide operation to exterminate the enemy forces. To

prevent the infiltration of spies, I will assign my subordinates to set up a 'barrier' in the academy and city. You won't have to worry about the same thing happening again, sir." The 'barrier' was a spy network or surveillance zone. Eru might be good, but he knew nothing about spy warfare and had no idea about countermeasures. And so, he left the anti-spy job to the professionals. Eru was satisfied with their secure countermeasures and nodded with a smile. "I understand, I will leave all this to you experts. Tell me if there are any problems, otherwise, just report periodically." "Understood, I will enroll in the Pilot faculty class as the contact agent. I will report to you if there are any problems, sir." Nora bowed respectfully after her report and left. Eru waved to her as she left and squinted his eyes, revealing a dangerous smile. So we dug the spy out? It is not good to think this is 'boring', but I was hoping they would struggle a bit more. Eh, they will come after me one day, so I have to be prepared. It was fortunate that no one knew what Eru was thinking. Lost in thought, the distracted Eru didn't realise someone was watching him from the shadows. That person hesitated for a moment before leaving the conference room. "... Eru looked so happy..." The figure that left the conference room, Ady, walked away dejectedly. "Eru was always treated like a toy, but I have never seen him chatting so happily before..." This was a serious problem. Most girls would pat Eru's head when they talk to him or treat him like a soft toy, so he didn't have much of a chance to have a serious conversation. Together with his unique hobby, the choice of topics was limited, and few girls could keep up. This meant that person was a serious threat to Ady, or that's what she thought. She thought about that girl chatting with Eru: Tall for a girl with a slender body type, monotonous in her speech and with pleasant facial features. It was dangerous indeed. Despite the danger, Ady realised something. "... That's right! The girls that talk with Eru are all tall. Could it be... he prefers tall girls!?" It might be rude to Ady, who felt she realised some important truth, but that was a misunderstanding. Eru was just shorter than the people around his age, including the girls. Regrettably, no one was there to correct this misunderstanding, which was usually the job of her twin brother. "If that is so, I should stand a chance too! But if Eru only likes girls who are cuter than him, I will be troubled..." Eru was shorter than average, but Ady was taller than girls her age. She didn't mind it, but with Eru, who was an example of 'what is cute', she would compare herself to him. From the fact that she didn't exclude Eru since he was a boy, Ady had a rather unique interest. "Ah, but he looked so happy, what did they talk about... The only topics I know Eru is interested in would be Silhouette Knights and the Silver Phoenix Knights." The intelligence reports of the Blue Hawk Knights were of the utmost importance, but Ady didn't even know they existed. This was beyond her imagination. "A strong rival... I can't take it easy! But I don't understand Silhouette Knights that well... The most I can do is pilot the Silhouette Gear. That means I will only be the support. Hmm, a Knight would be better. To stay together with Eru, I will need a Silhouette Knight, too! I have to get my hands on one... That's it!" Ady thought of a great idea and waved her fist. She ran out with determination in her eyes. "Eru! I want to pilot a Silhouette Knight, too!" That night in Eru's room, inside the Echevarria residence. Eru and Chid were leisurely engraving scripts onto a silver plate to create the propeller that was mentioned earlier. In contrast to their crazy intention, their casual and innocent demeanor made them look like kids doodling. In response to Ady, who made such an announcement after showing up, the two of them stopped the movement of their hands and lifted their heads. "What's up? Isn't that announcement like Eru's 'I love Silhouette Knights' trademark?" "Think about it carefully

Chid, we are also members of the Silver Phoenix Knights, so there's nothing weird about me wanting to pilot a Silhouette Knight! Or rather, I want to do it!" She stood up straight and said passionately, making the other two grow more suspicious. As expected, Eru wouldn't ignore any request related to Silhouette Knights. "I don't really get it, but you are welcome to if you want to pilot it. Hmm, let me see... then I will ask the two of you to help." "Yeah! I like you the most, Eru!!" "Eh? Me too? I don't mind." With Ady, who pounced over, hanging on him, Eru took a design plan from the table. Displayed before the twins was the new models the Silver Phoenix Knights were working on— 'Centaur Knight'. "Please help me build this Centaur Knight, and pilot it after it is complete." Facing the 'masterpiece' before her, Ady, who thought she would be starting with a Karrdator, turned stiff with a smile plastered on her face. "Hey, Eru, you want us to pilot the new model immediately? It is interesting, and I am fine with it, but why us? There are veterans like Edgar-senpai and Dietrich-senpai; why not let them do it?" Chid studied the plans closely, a little taken aback. Eru nodded, expressing that he understood Chid's concerns. "This Centaur Knight is very unique. It has the upper body of a man and the lower body of a horse, after all. And of course, the controls will be totally different; its difficulty will be beyond that of Tellestarle." The twins had never piloted normal Silhouette Knights before; it was easy to tell how difficult it would be to control the Silhouette Knight that was half man half horse. "So I changed my way of thinking— since this is a machine that combines two elements, then let 'two people pilot it'! Since it is still under construction, we can install pilot seats for two. The body of the horse is big, so there should be room to spare." At this current stage, there were no Silhouette Knights with dual pilot functionality no matter where you look. Since Silhouette Knights had a human shape, the controls would be linked to that of a single pilot, so there was no use for double seats, something no one had ever considered. If the Boss heard these words, he would definitely get a headache. Unfortunately, Chid and Ady didn't really understand Silhouette Knights, so they accepted Eru's words easily. "Of course, since it will be two people controlling one machine, it will require great teamwork. So Chid and Ady, who are twins would be the best choice. Also this is my real goal..." For them, the following words had a much greater impact. "I want you to construct the control script for the Centaur Knight while controlling it." Writing magic scripts. The two of them had learnt all sorts of scripts from Eru, but they couldn't write one themselves. They didn't expect to bear such a heavy responsibility for their first assignment. "My final goal is to let one pilot control it like a man riding a horse. I wanted to make the relevant control devices, but it was harder than I thought. It is still in the foundational stage. So I want to control it manually, then adjust the script slowly... It will be a big help if you are willing to try it." "Can we do it..." It was natural for Chid to be hesitant. It would be okay if Eru did it himself, he was capable and had a good track record, but the twin's capabilities were still unknown. And this would affect the new models of the Silver Phoenix Knights, something created through the efforts of everyone. For them to take part in the final stage was a huge responsibility. "Don't worry, leave it to us! But Eru, isn't it hard to construct scripts?" "Both of you could control the Silhouette Gear, the theory is the same, don't worry. Leave the basics to me, I will teach you the steps as well." Ady, who picked herself up, lifted her hand, ignoring the troubled Chid. Chid almost fell, stared at her, asking her to think about it carefully. The personality of the twins were different, but they had many similarities. Ady was full of drive, what about Chid? He wasn't unwilling but was more cautious. He had an interest in

Silhouette Knights, too and wanted to try piloting one. Seeing Ady's smile that seemed to say 'I know what you are troubled about', he had no choice but to raise both hands in surrender. "Ah—I get it! If we are going to do it, let's make it a good one!" "That's right! Fufu, we will be doing it together with Eru right? I'm looking forward to it!" After that, their life became more hectic. They started helping Eru while training and preparing for the day when the Centaur Knight would become complete. Several days later, Eru headed to the workshop with the amended design plans. The moment they saw the design plans, everyone, including the Boss, shouted hysterically. The special Centaur Knight design now had an additional 'double pilot' design, making it extremely strange. Even though the place was in an uproar, no one stopped Eru. The group that decided in the end to follow the plans had adapted well into the Silver Phoenix Knights. It had been about half a month since that day. Eru rushed excitedly to the workshop after class. His job everyday was to check on the building progress of the Centaur Knight. "Hello Boss, have they arrived yet?" "Oh, silver boy, the twins are here and already working on it." After greeting each other, they walked into the deepest corner of the workshop. The Silhouette Knight repair platform was removed, leaving a spacious area. The half assembled machine occupied the corner—it was a monster that was slowly growing in a womb, waiting for its chance to leap onto the stage of history. The machine itself was very large, almost touching the ceiling of the workshop that should provide plenty of clearance. Due to its unique shape, it couldn't use a normal repair platform and was held in place by numerous chains hanging from cranes. At a glance, the upper torso, which had been stripped of its armour, looked normal, but if you shifted your gaze down to its lower body, the weirdness jumps exponentially. The figure with four legs bent in a resting position made it obvious that the shape wasn't human. Larger than the Karrdator lined at the side, the weird alien shape was the Centaur Silhouette Knight, officially named Tzendorg, the latest machine being developed by the Silver Phoenix Knights. "Ah, it's Eru! Fufufu—you're just in time! Watch this!" "Now is a crucial time, Ady, don't look around. Come on, we are starting it up." Ady became excited after spotting Eru from the corner of the Holo monitor, while Chid calmed her down. They were in a small, dark area, which made it hard for them to move freely. That was the cockpit of the Tzendorg. Chid leaned against the backrest of the seat and opened his eyes. He used the dim light in front of him to see the figure of his sister and asked: "The control stick and Magius Engine are connected. What about your side?" The space extended narrowly to the front. Ady was seated in front of and a step lower than Chid. "Yes—it's just like what Eru taught us, but it sure is difficult. I will do my best!" She released the control handles she was gripping tightly, sat up, and breathed deeply. Chid was sitting in a normal pilot seat found in standard Silhouette Knights, but Ady had to straddle over her seat like riding a horse. The only difference was that the control handles were situated to the front left and right, so she had to lean forward to grab them. Simply put, she looked like she was riding a bicycle from earth. "Let's start the experiment. Everybody please move back!" Chid shouted through the microphone and the craftsmen in the area dispersed. At the same time, a Karrdator was on stand by for safety, with Eru clapping and cheering from a distance. "... Tzen-chan, let's go! Stand up—!!" The Ether Reactor churned faster with the howl of the air current, filling the entire body of Tzendorg with mana; the crystal tissue screeched with the sound of friction, and the four legs planted onto the ground firmly. The scene was like watching a newborn horse, its legs trembling to maintain balance as it stood up. "It will work, it will work,

right? Just like body strengthening... think of the position of the muscle... smoothen it, like this? This way; then here, exert more force..." The chains supporting the body dislodged one by one. Tzendorg don't need their support anymore and stood up with its own strength. Its movement was very stiff. As everyone had seen a live horse before, the clumsiness of the machine was obvious to them. That might be so, but Ady, who was controlling it on the inside was working very hard. She trained hard under her teacher, Eru, and the mana she built up using the Silhouette Gear kept supporting the incomplete Magius Engine. She might not have noticed—but this was the skill known as 'Direct Control', one of Eru's techniques. Right now, all she could do was use all of the skills she learned to do her best. It might be slow, but Tzendorg still took its first step. The craftsmen raised their hands to cheer them on. As if it was confirming each step it took, the alien shaped machine was born into this world. When Tzendorg was just a step away from leaving the workshop, Ady felt something strange and Tzendorg's body started leaning to one side. She couldn't exert strength through the legs no matter what she did and couldn't support the body. "Eh, why...!? Tzen-chan, work hard!" Ady's cheer was in vain, Tzendorg lost all its power, and its knees collapsed. Before the Karrdator standing by could assist, the enormous body fell onto the ground with a loud bang. "Boo hoo, sorry, everyone worked so hard to build it...! Sorry, Eru was looking forward to it, but I failed...!" "It's fine, don't cry. The most important thing is that both of you are unhurt." After being rescued from the immobile Tzendorg, Ady had been sitting on the ground wailing. For Ady, who wanted to dive into the production process of Tzendorg with Eru, this failure was a heavy blow. Eru had been consoling her all this while, but she showed no signs of calming down. "Ara, that was scary. Boss, was this our fault?" In contrast, Chid was taking it easy as usual, glancing sideways at the Karrdators working together to move Tzendorg back to the end of the workshop. The Boss crossed his arms and replied to his query. "... No, this isn't your fault. I think the problem is that this horsie is too big." "It's bad if it is too big?" Chid didn't understand and asked with his head tilted. "That's right, be it the structure or the ratio of crystal tissue, it couldn't be compared to normal machines. It is too big, so the Ether Reactor couldn't supply enough power for the horsie to consume." The failure this time wasn't because of the twin's piloting error. From the very beginning, Tzendorg had a critical flaw related to the standard structure of the Silhouette Knights. Silhouette Knights are man-made giants. However, the size of the parts that could be made by man was limited. In the end, Silhouette Knights could only be assembled from smaller parts. To maintain the structural integrity of the frame, Silhouette Knights needed to continuously consume a part of the mana generated by the Ether Reactor, so it could keep on using strengthening magic. If the strengthening magic was cut off, the Silhouette Knight wouldn't be able to support its own weight and would crumple easily. Normal Silhouette Knights don't need to consider this problem; even slightly bigger machines wouldn't have any issues. But Tzendorg was different, it was about fifteen meters in height, far exceeding the standard height of Silhouette Knights and had the lower body of a horse as well. It was larger than normal humanoid machines and was very heavy. This meant the mana drained by the strengthening magic was too much and cannot be ignored. "... That's how it is. I took a look; just the mana consumption from the connection of the frame used all the mana from the Reactor. Also, the amount of crystal tissue far exceeds normal machines, this is a mana glutton. Eh, even though the mana reserves are proportional to its size, but that was drained in no time, so it became like this

after a few steps.” The Boss moaned and scratched his messy hair. At this moment, Eru, who finally calmed Ady down joined the conversation. “I see, so the strengthening magic increased the consumption... Oh, so that’s why the size of the new versions of the Silhouette Knights didn’t change much, this is the best size for one Ether Reactor to support.” “Damn it, you still have time to be moved by this? This is bad, the problem is that the bigger the frame, the more mana it consumes. If you want to solve this, you have to shrink it to the size of a normal Silhouette Knight.” “If we stick to the size of standard machines, we can’t make the body of the horse, the upper body would be the same size as a child too. The combat ability would fall drastically, and there would be no reason for Tzendorg to exist.” “I know, but what can we do?” The Boss groaned bitterly. This was a bigger problem than what they faced when making Tellestarle. They couldn’t come up with any effective ways to solve this. “... Is Tzen-chan broken?” Ady looked at Tzendorg that was been carried back to the end of the workshop and muttered. Regardless of their original objective, no one would want to see a machine they built turning into a pile of junk. “It won’t be. Eh, this is a difficult issue, but we need to figure it out...” “Sorry Eru, it’s all because of me...” Ady started tearing up as she spoke. Eru smiled gently while looking at her, then hugged her slowly and soothed her like a child: “It’s not your fault, Ady. I should be thanking you for figuring out what the problem was. I only realised it because of your efforts. Fufufu, I have to settle this, so troubling but so interesting!!” “... Yes, thank you, Eru!!” Ady, who regained her smile, hugged Eru back, the fluttery feeling of hugging each other made her smile brighter— But Eru tunneled through her arms and pulled out a blackboard.” “Well then, to solve this problem...” Ignoring Ady, who was stiff and in a weird position, Eru’s chalk squeaked on the blackboard. Eru, who had a plan, sketched a simple design. It surprised the Boss who was watching from the side. “... Hey, boy, did you memorise the design plan of the horsie?” “...? Yes of course, how could I forget?” A curse-like passion allowed Eru to possess extraordinary memory with regards to things related to robots; especially Tzendorg, which was designed by him fervently from scratch. Seeing him detract from common sense so readily, even the Boss was shocked. Eru paid it no heed and muttered as he amended the designs on the blackboard: “Eh, it can’t be helped. I didn’t want to do this, but there is no other choice.” If they maintained the size, Tzendorg wouldn’t be able to function normally, and they couldn’t increase the output of the Ether Reactor by customising it either. So what should they do? The answer was simple, and Eru had already thought about it before. Even so, his expression remained gloomy. After staring at the plans and pondering for a moment, Eru sighed and turned around. “Oh? What is the matter? Since you have a solution, why are you hesitating?” The Boss relaxed after seeing him come up with an idea so easily, but his face changed after hearing his next sentence. “The size of the frame won’t change, the Reactor won’t change, there is only one answer left... increase the number of Reactors. By installing two Ether Reactors, the supply will double, and it could support Tzendorg even though it is so big.” He said it so simply but was a bit reluctant. The Boss was frozen on the spot. The twins couldn’t keep up with their conversation at all. After a long time, the Boss finally said with a moan: “You... want to put another heart inside this monster... ah, this fellow is a machine, so there is no need to be concerned with such ideas...” The hard to read face of the dwarf was shocked with widened eyes, and then he exhaled deeply. When all the air had been expelled, the Boss’ face was no longer shaken. “I actually don’t recommend this method. But we need to complete this project first. We will then use this

as the base to judge the structure, script and power consumption, and try to adjust it so just one Reactor will be enough.” Eru’s soft mumbles didn’t seem to be targeted at the Boss, but it looked like he was trying to convince himself. “So you know what hesitation is? Why? It’s rare to see you this reluctant.” “Because the Ether Reactor is mind numbingly expensive.” “... Ahh!? You are right, but is that the problem here!? Your common sense was missing all this time, and now you are worried about the cost!?” “Isn’t that obvious? The cost is very important, alright? Increasing the number of Ether Reactors means the price will skyrocket. Just making one is fine, but there will be no hope of mass production if the cost is too high, right?” “How should I put this... You have a point, but it is hard to accept when you are the one saying it.” Even though he was complaining, the Boss didn’t dismiss the idea. Double Ether Reactor— this had never been done before, but to solve this problem, there was no better method than this. The only problem he had was how to explain this queer idea to everyone. “No matter what, since we have decided to do this, we need to amend the design plans. Tzendorg has excess space in its frame, but we still need to drastically change the deployment and shape... Hmmm— it’s getting interesting! I’m fired up for tomorrow’s lessons.” “Hey, pay attention in class.” The Boss’ retort was slightly off topic, but it was lost on the excited Eru. Eru then turned his head to look at the twins. “It will be your turn after the modifications are done. Chid, Ady, let’s work hard together.” “Oh, leave it to us.” “Yeah! I will make sure Tzen-chan walks steadily next time!” The Boss looked at the three raising their arms up high and turned his attention to the blackboard. On it was weird things such as the Centaur, double Ether Reactor, and the double pilot seats. There should be a limit to how outrageous the design was. But the tougher the objective, the more valuable it was for craftsmen to challenge it. The Boss smiled at his own thoughts. “Ara, I am becoming rather nosey.” He then shouted energetically, gathering all the craftsmen in the workshop. A few minutes later, the workshop was filled with screams. The rollers of the crane rattled noisily moving along the tracks covering the roof of the workshop. A piece of metal that looked like armour hung from the end of the chain and was pushed by a craftsman operating a Silhouette Gear. Somewhere in the workshop, someone cursed as he was nearly crushed by the metal piece and moved away with hurried steps. The atmosphere in the workshop became heated, everyone was focusing on finishing the Centaur Silhouette Knight— Tzendorg. It occupied the deepest corner of the workshop at the beginning, but right now, it was placed openly in the middle. Most of Tzendorg’s outer skin had been installed; a horn could be seen protruding from its forehead. Its design was similar to the mythical creature. Compared to its thin upper body, its lower half was large and heavy. Every leg was as thick as a Silhouette Knight’s waist, it was obvious from a glance that it had extraordinary mobility. The waist was covered by several layers of metal plates, making it look like one giant metal piece. Structurally speaking, the ‘heart area’ comprising of the cockpit, Ether Reactors, and Magius Engine were placed in Tzendorg’s lower body, even though it was normally placed in the torso of a Silhouette Knight. This was because the double pilot seats, double Ether Reactors, and the enlarged Magius Engine could not fit inside the upper torso. Of course, this design was only possible because of Tzendorg’s enormous body. On the verge of completion, Tzendorg’s majestic and strange appearance made people stop in their tracks. The new craftsmen rushed around glancing at the figure of their senpai from time to time as they did their work quietly. They were awed by the sight they saw before them, but became shocked when they saw Tzendorg. As they completed

the training and work assigned to them, they finally got the hang of it. They even learned how to make Motor Rads recently and constructed their personal machines. They used them timidly in the beginning but were entranced by their convenience over time. Habit is a horrifying thing. A Knight carrying goods made his way through the students wielding hammers, searching for something. Blonde hair that was slightly long, a thin body with leather armour that was intentionally dyed red. He was the captain of the Silver Phoenix Knight's 2nd squad, Dietrich. After surveying the workshop, he inhaled and called out to the freshmen working nearby. "Hey, have you seen the Knight Commander?" The freshmen shook their head in unison when they heard Dietrich's question. The Knight Commander was a prominent figure in all sorts of ways, they would know if he was around. "Is that so? Thank you... Even his childhood friends are not around, where did our Knight Commander go? I hope he didn't come up with some weird idea." However, reality was cruel. What he was worried about turned out to be true. The Silver Phoenix Knights were about to finish the Centaur Knight, Tzendorg. The craftsmen were busy with this project, while the Knights focused on their training and instructing their juniors, living a hectic life every day. In the mean time, the Knight Commander, who had nothing to do was bored out of his mind. Please recall that this person made all sorts of things aside from Tzendorg. Such as the new equipment he was developing with his childhood friends — and to perform tests, something horrifying was happening. The sky was devoid of clouds, and the sunlight was warm; a great weather for a picnic. This was a forest some distance from Laihiala Academy City without any people. A giant paced through the sparse forest with heavy footsteps. It was the mass produced model belonging to the Silver Phoenix Knights, the Karrdator, and the pilot was Eru. Three Silhouette Gears were jogging behind it, two Motor Beats were piloted by Chid and Ady, and the Motor Rad was operated by Batson. Once they left the city and entered the forest, there would be the risk of encountering Demon Beasts. But even taking that into account, their equipment was still overkill. They walked as if they were enjoying a morning stroll for a while and finally reached an open space inside the forest. A duel level Demon Beast might have resided there in the past. Eru's Karrdator unloaded the goods it was keeping, which was opened by the three Silhouette Gears speedily. The strange tube-like equipment was installed onto the Karrdator, which was kneeling down on one knee. The tube was about as thick as a man's hug. The shoulder and waist of the Karrdator was modified in advance and had equipment that could secure the tubes firmly. "Alright, this should be everything. It is secured, but how should I put this..." "I'm done here too— that's right, how should I say it..." "With so many holes, it feels weird, right?" The three of them completed their work and looked up at the modified Karrdator. The plain appearance of the Karrdator became surrealistic with the tubes sticking out of it. "Let's begin the testing then. They say that slow and steady wins the race, I am hoping to see good results." Eru, who was in the pilot seat, either couldn't see the appearance of the machine or decided to ignore his three friends. Whichever it was, he still activated the Karrdator to test the mysterious equipment. Immediately, the sound of air being sucked in could be heard from the tube, which startled the birds in the forest, making them take flight. Chid, Ady, and Batson watched from a safe distance as the Karrdator lowered its stance and started running. The exertion of the crystal tissue pushed the ten metre tall giant body into a sprint, reaching top speed in no time. The test came next. Eru smiled fearlessly and squeezed all the additional buttons on the control stick at the same time. In that instant, the view of the world changed. The

interior of the tube was the shape of two funnels fused together, the front half was engraved with the script for Air Compression, sucking in air and compressing it before funneling it into the thin part in the middle; the back half was engraved with a script that produced a forward propelling force through an explosion spell. The compressed air would be transformed into a flame jet stream. Using 'Aero Thrust' to compress the air, explode it with flame magic, and using the high speed stream of air that was produced to propel the machine forward, was the theory these tubes, dubbed 'Magi Jet Thruster' by Eru, worked under. The first thing they saw was a bright red flash before a long flame tail emerged. After a moment, the ear deafening roar reached them.

The activated Magi Jet Thrusters revealed their true colours, spitting out flames nonstop. The compressed air expanded consecutively, and the reactionary force from the jet stream accelerated the Karrdator. No, it wasn't enough to describe it as acceleration; 'speed burst' would be a more adequate description.



“Wooooaaahhhhhh!? Full— speed— ahead—!?” The force far exceeded what the creator, Eru, expected, dragging the Karrdator along with abnormal speed. The heavy force of

inertia pressed onto his petite body, affecting the accuracy of his controls. All this while, the Magi Jet Thrusters followed their given script obediently, generating force without restraint. While accelerating endlessly, a small turbulent airflow lifted the Karrdator upwards. It lost its balance and became air bound. Normally, it would fall back down shortly after, but the wild beast equipped on the Karrdator overcame the pull of gravity with overwhelming force. Eru was panicking because he was disoriented from the inertia when the machine flew towards the sky freely. The flight didn't take into account the physics of aerodynamics, and it was maintained by the explosive propelling force. Eru did all that he could to control the machine so it wouldn't be swept away like a leaf in a typhoon. Unfortunately, keeping the machine from falling apart mid-air already took everything he had. The Karrdator flew into sky with fire trailing behind it, like a meteor flying in the opposite direction. Chid, Ady, and Batson were dumbstruck by the awe-inspiring scene despite Eru's dangerous situation. The development of the situation was full of impact but ended abruptly. This was because the Magius Engine that was faithfully carrying out its assignment in place of the panicking Eru. Before the mana pool ran dry from intense consumption, the limiter was triggered, cutting the mana supply off. Immediately, the flames erupting from the Karrdator vanished, and the machine started falling because of the gravity. "Wahhhh—Ahhh!!" Ironically, the stoppage of the Magi Jet Thrusters gave Eru the chance to regain control. Ignoring the speed for now, it was lucky that the propeller stopped before it climbed too high. The failing machine returned to the ground before it fell apart, but it landed roughly with no drop in speed. Braking at such high speed caused sparks to fly from the legs of the machine, the ground scraping away the outer skin of the Karrdator like a nail file. The legs would reach their limit soon if this went on. Realising this, Eru made the machine fall forward and roll on the ground to disperse the impact. The Magi Jet Thrusters bent and broke with every tumble, but Eru could not spare the effort to care. The Karrdator rolled like this for a few hundred meters before it slowed to a stop, lying on the ground with its limbs spread out. "... Is Eru still alive?" "Hyaal? That looks bad! Help him!!" After their surroundings turned peaceful again after some time, the three childhood playmates finally regained their wits. Eru who woke up locked eyes with a upside down face. "Eru... You are finally awake, are you alright?" He checked his surroundings and saw the Karrdator, which had become a lump of scrap metal. He noticed that Ady's thighs were under his head. He was sleeping on Ady's thighs all this time. Eru shook his muddled brain as Ady brushed away the hair on his forehead. "Ady... I, am fine... But, ughhh, it won't do. This equipment won't work... Rejected!... We don't need to scrap it, but we need to redo it." "Eru, you need to reflect on your actions." Getting complaints from an unhappy face by someone worried about you, even Eru couldn't refute it. He sat up and awkwardly shifted his gaze, seeing the terrible state the Karrdator was in. It still had the shape of a human, but the outer skin was out of shape and tattered, and the leg armour was on the verge of falling apart. Because of the heat from the friction, some of the parts were welded together. It couldn't be used anymore and was all torn up. Eru made it out safely and only lost his consciousness thanks to his regular training and physical abilities, please don't try this at home. When he realised Eru had woken up, Batson, who was picking up the spare parts that had fallen all over the place, walked over. "Oh, are you okay, Eru? That was close, if you had stopped the thruster any later, you might have turned into a star." "... No, it stopped by itself. This super glutton burned through the mana reserves in one shot and stopped on its own!!

That's how it is. No, this is a complete failure!!" "Ahh, calm down Eru! There, there, don't be mad." Ady tried her best to restraint Eru, who was losing his cool after recalling the situation prior. He struggled for a while and became quiet shortly. Turning behind him, he saw a long line traced across the ground. Everyone was once again relieved that Eru was safe. "Erm, Eru, how about giving up? This is too dangerous." Ady was really concerned about Eru and tried convincing him— however, Eru was still Eru. He lifted his head from his arms and regained his passionate expression. "Okay, reflection time is over. I was too rash; things need to be done in steps. First would be the scale of the script and the review of the output. I need to create a new control structure to fit the situation. Mana consumption is still a problem, so it will be controlled just like the output... No, is there a way to work around this by modifying the machine structure?" His brain was probably constructing a new plan. Seeing how unfazed he was after a major accident, Chid and Batson couldn't help looking up at the sky. This guy is hopeless. Eru moaned for a moment, and then turned to the other three as if he just thought of a great idea. "By the way, do you want to try it?" "Who would want to?!" The answer from the three of them echoed through the forest. On a side note, when the Silver Phoenix Knight members saw Eru piloting the tattered Karrdator back to base, they thought he was attacked by the enemy and entered high alert. In a corner of the workshop within Laihiala Pilot Academy, a table and chair that were obviously made hastily were placed there. A name plate that was similarly rushed work was placed on the table, with the words 'Knight Commander' scribbled on it. Eru sat on the chair all by himself, looking at the people around him anxiously. "... Do I have to stay here?" "Yes, just sit there, Knight Commander, Sir." "Yup, with you around, everyone will become tenser." "That's right; a Knight Commander has to be steadfast just like this." "Haven't you learned your lesson after creating such a big mess..." And of course, around him were the pride of the Silver Phoenix Knights— the Dwarf Chief Craftsman and the well trained pilots. They were giving off an aura of pressure, standing at the side stiffly while forcing Eru to remain in his seat. "You are all so mean..." "Moron! Who knows what you will do if we don't keep an eye on you!" Eru looked at the machine besides him with grudging eyes, the tattered Karrdator. After that terrible accident known as the Magi Jet Thruster experiment, the machine could should walk on its own, but inspection showed that it was a lost case and strictly prohibited from use— the subject of the prohibition was the Knight Commander. Also, this person said he was going to do some motion tests and ended up totaling a Silhouette Knight. Hence, he was being 'punished' by everyone in the Knight Order and forced to do his 'Knight Commander duties'. "Don't worry, I am reflecting on my actions. Look, I amended the design plans." "Enough already! How is this reflecting!? You stay here!!" The Boss grabbed the design plans Eru took out from nowhere. Their Knight Commander was extremely talented and was full of passion; he will do things lacking in common sense like taking on Demon Beasts by himself or challenging Silhouette Knights without piloting one. However, he usually overcomes the obstacle with his powerful capability that verges on the fringe of being cheat-like, so no one attempted to stop him. But what would happen if he was to fail— everyone was losing their minds because Eru almost triggered a tragedy. "Eh, fine, I get it. I will help with simple tasks for the time being." Eru who worked hard to finish the improved designs was unhappy, but he probably felt guilty for causing the accident and offered to help obediently. "... We can't let Eru have free time, let's finish up Tzendorg first. I remember there are a lot of other

equipment, we will let the freshmen handle those designs. In conclusion, don't let him barge into other projects." They didn't have a better solution right now. To avoid their Knight Commander from stirring up bigger trouble, everyone moved with a strange sense of tension. At the same time, Duke Knut Dixgard received a report. The content was: 'The Knight Commander of the Silver Phoenix Knights attempted to pilot a Silhouette Knight to fly, but he failed.' Knut's head started to hurt after hearing the report. "... That Ernesti kid, after the precedent of Casadesus, doesn't he plan to hide the new designs?!" "What do you think Sir? Should we subtly remind Sir Ernesti?" The member of the Blue Hawk Knights reporting to him— Nora said expressionlessly. But for an elite agent like her to propose this idea, it showed that she couldn't take it anymore. Knut sighed, thought about it before waving his hand. "... No, forget it; the Silver Phoenix Knights will clean up the mess. The things made by that kid will spread throughout the nation one day. For now, just concentrate on dispatching any foreign interference." "Is that fine?" "That sort of person will challenge enthusiastically whenever he meets a bottleneck, but will lose his drive if he gets bothered by trivial matters... His Majesty was like that in the past." Seeing him look into the distance while muttering, he must be reminiscing about the past. Nora who sensed his mood decided to not probe further. "Just let him do what he wants, he will definitely produce results. All we can do is prepare the best environment for him..." Although tired, Knut was firm in his attitude. Nora bowed respectfully and agreed with him. Fortunately for everyone, nothing happened during this period of time which passed peacefully. Eru obediently designed the various equipments and didn't do anything that will cause grand explosions. The members were cautious in the beginning and became distracted because of their busy schedule. The second incident crept in with this chance. "Ah, Edgar-senpai, please wait." Someone called out to Edgar, who was heading out to train the freshmen as usual. He turned towards the familiar clear voice and as expected, Eru was standing there. But unlike usual, he was holding a lot of short sword in his arms and gave one to Edgar. "Please take this." "What? Short sword... That's rare, made from silver?" Edgar looked at the short sword given to him carefully; it was decorated elegantly like a ceremonial weapon, and was made of pure silver. Although silver was a type of metal, it was far softer than steel, not a suitable material for weapons. "It can be used as a weapon, but it has other functions. Please follow me." Before he could enquire further, Eru started walking towards a Karrdator. Edgar couldn't conceal his puzzlement, but he still followed him, believing that he will know if he does. The two of them came before the normal pilot seat of the Karrdator. Since he lost Earlecumber during the Casadesus incident, Edgar had been piloting a Karrdator and was familiar with this place. He followed Eru's instruction and sat down, going through the launching procedures with his trained hands. After tightening his harness and adjusting the position of the control stick and pedals, he pushed the output control stick, shifting the dormant Ether Reactor and raising the output to the active level. The strange thing happened here. Normally, the trembling of the Reactor could be felt from moving the control stick, but he couldn't hear the noise of air being sucked into the vents. The Ether Reactor remained dormant. The Ether Reactor start up failed— for Edgar who had plenty of piloting experience, this was the first time he encountered this. He started to panic and reattempted the startup procedure. But no matter how many times he tried the results were the same, he couldn't startup the Reactor and the machine. His anxiety rises every time he tried. At this moment, he remembered why he was here— the Knight Commander who asked him to come here,

who was currently sitting on the open chest armour with a mischievous smile. "... Hey Ernesti, did you do something to this?" The boy clapped his hands, a gesture indicating to Edgar that he was right. This was a little revenge from Eru who was being lectured. He enjoyed himself for quite a while and then lowered his head towards Edgar who was glaring at him with folded arms. "Yes, sorry. Don't be upset, I will reveal the answer now. Eh, please look at your feet, there is a dent, right? Please insert the short sword I gave you into it." Edgar did as Eru said with an unhappy expression. When the silver sword went in all the way, it made a clicking sound and fitted in, followed by the startup noise of some device. Shortly after, a strong groan came from beneath the pilot seat; it was the familiar heartbeat of the Silhouette Knight. The Ether Reactor finally started churning out mana and started up. "This tremour... Great, the Ether Reactor started up. It didn't move at all just now... No, wait, so that's it. Ernesti, this sword is a key, right?" "Correct. I said this before, right? 'I will prepare a device preventing the Silhouette Knight from being stolen', this is the result... I dub it 'Pattern Identificator'." Facing the grinning Eru, Edgar could only sigh deeply and raise both his hands. "Ernesti... You really scared me. Pranks are fine, but could you be gentler, this is not good for my heart. How does this work? Will inserting any sword be fine?" "No way, if you don't use that sword, this Karrdator won't be able to move. It looks like a sword, but there is an engraved script inside. And this indenture has a script that corresponds to this. If the combination is incorrect, the Reactor won't start and the Magius Engine won't work either." Without the mana supply from the Ether Reactor and the Magius Engine, the Silhouette Knight won't be able to start up. This was an anti-theft script which was different from scripts that produce magic phenomena. It is incredibly difficult to decipher it by working backwards. In other words, as long as this sword was secured, the Karrdator won't get stolen. Edgar tried pulling the silver sword out, and the Ether Reactor returned to dormant mode and the Magius Engine became unresponsive. Leaving the prank earlier aside, he was really impressed this time. "I want to ask, is there any meaning in making it a silver sword?" "Engraving the script requires a certain amount of space, and it was boring carving it on a plate. so I thought of going for a modern design. Engraved scripts and silver work well together, and we are the Silver Phoenix Knights, so I used silver to make the short swords to reflect our name." Edgar studied the short sword carefully. With this device, one of the tragedies that happened in Casadesus could have been avoided—that 'stolen machine' flashed across his mind. He lifted the short sword as if in prayer and sheathed it carefully. "Pattern Identificator"—this anti-theft device for Silhouette Knights became spread nationwide shortly after it was developed, and the use of a silver short sword as the key became the standard. As for the silver short sword becoming a term synonymous with pilots, that was something that happens quite some time later. After being grounded from the development of the Magi Jet Thruster which Eru considered as important as life, Eru bore a greater grudge than expected. After researching the Pattern Identificator, Eru devoted his excess energy into the development of other devices. That might be so, but no matter how much he progressed, he couldn't complete his development without any craftsmen. When Tzendorg was about to be completed, some of the craftsmen had spare time. The freshmen who were getting the hang of things also became reliable, and devote themselves into the development of these equipment. These additional equipment of the Silhouette Knights were known as Option Works. Following that, the ones becoming busy are the pilots doing the testing. They boarded the Silhouette Knights with various types of Option Works

outfitted and stepped onto the training arena to experiment. Edgar and Helvi were among them. “Edgar, are you ready? I will be coming from the front.” The two Karrdator faced each other, with Helvi’s machine raising a sword. She only used one hand, but it was a cautious stance that was hard to attack head on; the Karrdator that Edgar was piloting nodded slightly but didn’t move or adopt a defensive stance. Helvi’s Karrdator was an original model; Edgar’s machine had a strange piece of equipment. The additional armament covered the back to its shoulders. It was a defensive shield consisting of armour plates with a different shape supported by sub arms— the Flexible Coat prototype. It was made by assembling several steel plates together, but it fitted the rugged appearance of the Karrdator, giving it a steady impression. “Alright, you can begin whenever you are ready.” After receiving the signal, Helvi immediately hacked at Edgar from the front. The blunt training sword were swung powerfully. Facing her accurate attack, Edgar gauged the adequate distance from his pilot seat before opening the switch added on the top of his control stick. The additional armour morphed speedily once it received the command and protected the head and upper part of the shoulders with a slight noise. Helvi’s sword hit the raised armour and slipped down to the sides with sparks. The mobile additional armour used strengthening magic to reinforce its weak mobile parts, displaying powerful defensive capability by withstanding a direct hit. “Well done. Next, let’s try a more powerful attack.” “No, please wait, I have to check the results... It used a lot of mana; this is a prototype after all. Could this defensive equipment be an unexpected mana glutton? The defence is strong enough, but it does not move smoothly, I have to inform Ernesti... Okay, sorry for the wait, let’s try an attack from a different angle. Structurally speaking, invoking strengthening magic will drastically consume mana, so the design gave up on defending attack for long periods, changing it to deflecting the attack’s direction to lessen the mana used. The preset moves are all slightly tilting to the side. Helvi thrusted fiercely several times and was parried without fail. She became excited and started getting serious. Although Edgar was using defensive equipment, this was a spar between Silhouette Knights and any mistake could be serious. But neither of them minded. Helvi ‘believed’ Edgar will parry her attacks and Edgar lived up to her expectations. Their trust in each other turned the equipment testing into spar training. “... I think that side is getting scary.” Some distance away from the two machines in battle mode, Dietrich was performing tests for other equipment as well. Helvi was getting less hesitant in her attacks and her strikes became fiercer, escalating the situation. He wished Edgar all the best and turned the red Silhouette Knight towards the silent target board. “Alright, me too...” Guyale followed Dietrich’s control and swung its fist in a punch. At first glance, he didn’t have any equipment, but the weird thing was the long distance between the fist and the target he was aiming at. Since the arms won’t grow longer, he couldn’t hit the target, his punch fell short. It was puzzling why he was so fired up about this. However, he didn’t perform this action with no reason. The instant the arm reached maximum speed, a piece of metal shot out from the gauntlet underneath the fist, that was shaped like two stiletto that were joined at the bottom. The speed was very slow, would this kind of attack work? At this moment consecutive explosions of compressed air erupted behind the metal piece, the reactionary force accelerating it, pushing it to hit the target with a dull thud. The target board that was covered with steel shook and creaked from the impact. The target board was quite heavy, which meant the weapon was effectively strong. But the weapon has yet to display its real prowess. Dietrich, who confirmed the target, squeezed the additional trigger on his control

stick and the devices installed on Guyale's wrists performed the tactical level script in accordance to the command it received. Looking closely, a steel wire containing silver nerves was attached to the metal piece and was connected to the gauntlet. Aside from the ability to transfer mana, it also has the property of metals, which was conducting electricity. Lightning magic was casted from within the gauntlet, its power comparable to real lightning. Electric current was transmitted through the wire towards the target, making it sparkle from the heat before exploding. This weapon was named 'Lightning Flail', combining an upgrade of Anchor Wire with Silhouette Arms, it was the state of the art tazing weapon. "Wah, that is scary! It is sneaky, but I like it." The lightning flail proposed by Eru was a rather unique design among the Option Works. Unlike the Flexible Coat or Back Weapon which were installed externally, it was built internally. Because of the assembly nature of Silhouette arms, it was never installed inside the Silhouette Knight itself before. The engraving on the silver plate not only lack durability, but it took up a lot of space and was a heavy and fragile equipment. Installing this inside the machine will make it a weakness, not something the Silhouette Knights which were designed for combat should have. Lightning magic scripts were more complicated than fire magic, meaning the engraving would need to be even larger. Simply put, unlike the flames which would fly towards the target after shooting it, the lightning magic needed scripts to direct it. However, Lightning flail solves this problem with the use of Anchor Wire. After hitting the target with steel wires, the lightning would then be directed to it, omitting the part of the script which directs the attack. This not only miniaturises the silhouette arm, but it was successfully built into the machine itself. That might be so, but only the melee combat Guyale equipped with larger armour could pull this off. To install this on a Karrdator, it would require a massive overhaul of the armour which was inefficient. "The movement of the arms is still heavy... But the attack can be hidden, which is a great feature." The biggest advantage of the in-built Lightning flail was the difficulty to discern it from its appearance. As the silhouette arm component was protected by the strong gauntlet armour, it was more durable than the handheld version. A powerful lightning strike when the enemy least expects it, it was a rather evil equipment. Aside from Flexible Coat and Lightning Flail, they also designed and tested many Option Works, but most of them turned out to be failures. By doing self reflection and refining the design, the equipment was gradually completed. And so during this period of time, a bunch of Karrdator with strange equipment appeared frequently around Laihiala Pilot Academy. "Alright— time for the routine inspection. First is movement... Reactor one, Reactor two output stable. The distribution readings... are within safety parametres." Chid checked each the reading displayed before the pilot seat habitually. While he was doing so, the groan of the Ether Reactors filled the entire cock pit, turning from a hum into a rumble loud enough to shake the air. It then quieted down and maintained at a steady pace. "Magius Engine performance check complete—! The crystal tissue is functioning okay... alright, Tzenchan, open your eyes—!!" Next was the energetic cry of Ady, followed by the wall in front of the cockpit lighting with a glaring brightness. It only seemed glaring because the two of them had gotten used to the darkness. That wall— the Holo Monitor displayed the scene captured by the eyes of Tzendorg— the craftsmen who were watching from a distance as usual, and the squad of Karrdator who were standing at the side. There was a period of time when Tzendorg couldn't operate because of the insufficient mana supply. To overcome this, they used multiple Ether Reactors, something that had never been done

in history before. The scale of the project was enormous, but with the efforts of the craftsmen, they finally completed the alterations. Recently, Chid and Ady spent every day doing testings. “We will be speeding up a little today, right? Fufu, it is about time Tzen-chan shows its true ability!” “I heard that after this is completed successfully, only the inspection of the details would be left. I’m counting on you.” Ady grabbed the control handles tightly once again and slowly push the pedal down, making Tzendorg stand up. The two Ether Reactors repeatedly pump air in and out; all its armour creaked against each other noisily. The horse got up from its sitting position with the screech of crystal tissue contracting. Its feet stamped heavily onto the ground, supporting its huge body. Tzendorg’s movement was strong with no signs of unsteadiness. The chains supporting the machines broke away one by one, releasing this monstrosity from its bounds. The twins had steady control. Using Direct Control taught to them by Eru personally, with the help of the specially made Magius Engine, the Centaur was completely tamed by them. This abnormal Centaur machine and the brand new concept of double pilot controls won’t be so easy to master for normal pilots. This duo also has the benefit of not having prior habits engrained into them from piloting normal Silhouette Knights. Tzendorg moved its body slightly after standing up as if it was checking the situation. After completing the inspections, it began striding forth slowly. This machine has more than twice the weight of the standard models, the weight of its steps were unbelievably heavy, shaking the earth with its every move. Under the watchful eyes of the crowd, it made its way out of the workshop. And finally, its body basked under the sunlight. The unfurnished dark green skin and the lone horn protruding from its head reflected the brilliant sunlight. The image of a man combined with a horse was the portrayal of the term, ‘speed and might’. However, that was the end of this moving scene as a dangerous smile came from the megaphone of Tzendorg, giving everyone present an ominous feeling. Just as they feared, Tzendorg’s hind leg started digging into the ground, just like a horse getting ready to charge. “He, fufufu, full speed ahead—!!” “Ah damn it!! At least watch your surroundings, wahhhh, everyone evacuate—!” Not having ingrained notion of Silhouette Knights was an advantage for the twins, but having no concept of it at all wasn’t a good thing. They unhesitantly sprinted out from the workshop. As the surprised craftsmen ran away in a panic, Tzendorg started galloping like a real horse, leaving the dumbstruck members behind in the dust. “That’s dangerous! Damn it!! Ahh, those two are definitely the friends of that boy!! All of them are the same!” “Hmm, the movement when sprinting at full speed is fine, good job.” “Erm, Eru, I don’t think that is the issue right now—” After glancing at the big and small dwarfs’ posture of looking at the sky, Tzendorg charged outside the Academy City in one shot. Equipped with crystal tissues that doesn’t feel fatigue and double Ether Reactors churning out massive supplies of mana, Tzendorg ran without slowing down. The scenery that flashes by like the wind filled the twins with exhilaration. “Amazing, amazing! Tzen-chan is fast!” “Haha! So cool! This is too good, Tzendorg!! Alright, let’s take a lap around the forest!!” “Agreed!!” After Chid and Ady returned from their joyride, they were greeted by the iron fist of the Boss.

Knights & Magic - Volume 3 - Chapter 22

C.E. 1278, the beginning of autumn. Shortly after sunrise, a convoy of carriages appeared on the Fremmevira Highway shrouded in the morning fog. This merchant convoy mostly consisted of fully loaded carriages with giant figures surrounding them. They were the merchants and their escorts operating in Fremmevira Kingdom— Merchant Knights. In Fremmevira Kingdom, even the merchants require the protection of Silhouette Knights. The scene of them travelling around the area with several Silhouette Knights in tow resulted in their nickname of Merchant Knights. Basically, merchants were energetic and tend to wake up early. This was because the faster they move, the more time they have to conduct business. This habit remained unchanged even in this foggy season. "... What...? There is something ahead, halt!" As the Merchant Knights were slowly advancing on the highway covered in the morning fog— The Silhouette Knight taking point suddenly shouted out a warning. The convoy stopped on his command. The hired pilot escorts were great in detecting any disturbances; there must be something unusual happening if they sensed anything. The pilots on the escort machines cautiously reached for the swords at their waist. Their vision was too blur, so they had to listen carefully with their ears. The convoy stopping made the surroundings fall into a silence. A sound from afar could be heard. The pilot frowned. His ears told him that was the sound of the horse's hooves, but from this distance, it was too loud. It was like a gigantic and heavy horse galloping. Moments later, he could make out a giant figure moving in the fog. Something was running with the loud sound of the horse's hooves. They couldn't tell from the shadowy figure, but the escorts assume it to be a Demon Beast and drew their swords for battle. Protecting the carriages behind them, they tried to shift their position and plan their escape. It was natural for them to make such a judgement, the shadows in the fog was as large as a Silhouette Knight after all. They might not know what this thing resembling a horse was, but it must be at least a Duel level Demon Beast. As the escort machines went out in order to buy time for the carriages to turn around, the Demon Beast probably noticed their presence. It slowed down with a large sound, and stopped to face off against them. The escort pilots gulped anxiously. Even through the fog, they could tell the opponent had the shape of a horse. It must be nimble, capable of shaking off the escorts and attacking the carriages. But the moment of tension didn't last long. As they were facing off against that Demon Beast, it turned and— "Neigh—!" The Demon Beast left the dumbstruck escorts behind with a sharp child-like neigh. The pilots felt as if someone pulled a prank on them. Even so, they didn't dare to relax and kept their guard up. Only when they could no longer hear the sound of the hooves did they restarted their journey and hurried to the next city. With this incident as the spark, more and more people met this mysterious Demon Beast on the west Fremmevira Highway. With the increase in witness accounts, rumours of the horse-like Demon Beast spread across the various cities, including Laihiala Academy City where the Silver Phoenix Knights were based. "I have

been hearing that rumour everywhere, talking about a horse-like Demon Beast.” “Yeah, we are famous!” “Wait, wrong, they don’t know that was us, so we are not really famous right?” “Is that so? Isn’t that the same?” Hidden in the forest were three children, two of them shaking their black hair as they quibbled loudly. The other figure that was a head shorter stood up to stop them, his silvery purple hair swaying in the wind. “How should we put it... Anyway, the timing is just right. We completed the testing and can’t hide it any longer, let’s finish this.” They weren’t standing on the ground or the trees, but a steel structure that was hidden in the forest. The standard armour revealed its identity as a Silhouette Knight. Its body was much larger than normal Silhouette Knights and most strange of all was its horse shaped lower body. Simply put, they were standing on the real identity of the ‘Highway Demon’. “So we are finally going to do it?” “Yes, in order to complete His Majesty’s orders... Let’s scare them out of their wits.” With time, the widespread rumour of the Highway Demon died down like the receding tide. People no longer talked about it with interest. When the rumour started once again, it was in a totally different form. When the rumour of the mysterious Demon Beast was at its height, Fort Dufaure to the south of the Royal Capital Känkänen was quietly basking in seething heat. As expected of Dufaure, the headquarters of the national Silhouette Knights development agency— National Technological Robotics Laboratory. The city was filled with numerous facilities related to Silhouette Knights. There were three research development workshops, the vast warehouse stores all the materials required from research to manufacturing. Apart from these, there was also a training arena for the testing of Silhouette Knights. The scale of the arena was top notch within the Kingdom. Right now, ten Silhouette Knights stood on the field. They were the source of the heat, and was the symbol representing the city’s reason for existence. The training arena was a traditional stone made structure— a rectangular space covered with stone walls. There were seats on the walls with a maintenance facility nearby. The Silhouette Knights were of the same model, on stand by in the middle of the arena. The giants made of crystal tissue and steel maintained their position of kneeling on one knee, waiting silently for their master’s command. The machines were rugged in appearance, which was the style of this country. They had no discerning features, designed to be durable and tough, giving it a feel similar to Karrdators. But on the whole, it was obviously different from Karrdators. Its armour was sleeker and efforts were clearly put into the welding and joints, giving it a polished and smooth impression. With the design of the Karrdator as its base, it was understandable why it bore a resemblance. Using the technology of Tellestarle, this was the next generation of mass produced machines— the prototypes of the model ‘Karrdator Dash’. The chief of the 1st R&D workshop, Gaizka Johannsson, looked at the rows of Karrdator Dash with mixed feelings. They looked like the relatives of Karrdator, but the content differs completely. Aside from using part of the frame, the other parts were newly crafted. The only parts they could salvage from the original was twenty percent, which was a clear display of how much modification and effort the craftsmen of NTR Lab went through to reach this stage. Karrdator Dash inherited all the functions of Tellestarle— which was the strand crystal tissue, capacity frame and back weapon. Of course, it wasn’t a simple task of replacing all the crystal tissue with strand crystal tissue and installing all the new functions. They carefully adjust the position and amount of crystal tissue within the frame. Gaizka and the rest realised the increase in strength output will improve attack power, but it has the disadvantage of affecting the controls. Simply put, the Tellestarle was too strong

which gave rise to the problem of losing control easily. Hence, they decrease the amount of muscles, increasing the power of the machine to just 30% above standard. Since there were fewer muscles, the machine had more space available. It was filled with capacity frame, improving the unresolved issue of mana storage and increased consumption. Not only that, with the fervent adjustment to the restricted strength output, Karrdator Dash's controls improved dramatically. As of now, the Dash had shaken off its notoriety of a wild horse, and grown into a tamed machine similar to the Karrdator, drastically improving the flaws of the Tellestarle. Gaizka and the craftsmen worked through the stages one at a time, but a final part troubled them to no end. Unexpectedly, it was the back weapon that had been fully developed when the Tellestarle was finished. Frankly speaking, they had been focusing on improving the Silhouette Knight, but the back weapon was different. This equipment was both unique and mysterious, and was perfectly designed, leaving no space for modification. Just analysing the Magius Engine 'courtesy of Ernesti' overwhelmed them. The only thing they could do was to duplicate it in tears. The Dash had two Silhouette Arms on their back—Culverin, its structure and design was copied from Tellestarle which made the craftsmen unsatisfied—a small bit of dissatisfaction at the very end. The culverin moved smoothly, reaching the goal of mass production. Increased strength output, improved armour, all sorts of new technology and the tamed controls which was the special feature of the Fremmevira Kingdom. The Karrdator Dash was the combination of all the technology within NTR Lab. Seeing them standing tall filled the people of 1st R&D workshop with deep satisfaction and confidence. Even the narrow minded Gaizka was excited, even more so for the others. The current Karrdator Dash could definitely become the new massed produced model. Witnessing the birth of a new model after a hundred years was a great honour for all the craftsmen present. They had no doubt about the greatness of the Dash and the prospect of NTR Lab from hence forth. In a building far away from the R&D Lab, a figure was watching the Karrdator Dash in the arena. He was the director of NTR Lab, Olver Blomdahl. There was another person inside the room. Maybe it was because Olver refrained from speaking or that the visitor was waiting patiently, the atmosphere differs from the passionate air in the arena and was much calmer. Olver lowered the blinds and took a seat behind his extravagant table. "This is a great day and should be celebrated." "Are you not going to join them, Sir 'Watchmen'?" "No, the noise would be too much for ears like ours. It is tiring to keep putting on my disguise." As they converse, the other party stood quietly in the centre of the room. They had a similar air about them; maybe it was their facial features, or their silky blonde hair—and their long ears. Their ears seemed sensitive to sound, and must be hard on them to stay in a noisy environment. "Alright, since we know the recent circumstances of our opponent, we can't take it easy anymore. I am the highest ranking officer of this agency after all." The other man showed an clear expression for the first time, which was confusion. "Sir Watchmen really thinks... that the rumoured 'Highway Demon' is that?" "I know why you think otherwise, I want to doubt it, too, but for the news centred on the vicinity of Laihiala to surface at such a time...It's hard to not be suspicious." Olver's eyes had similar doubts as he answered with a wry smile. "It has been a long time since the Red Rabbits sent the Karrdators to Laihiala. The original new model... was it Tellestarle? I don't think its creator didn't make any move all this while. Eh, if the rumours are true, they have made something terrifying." An indescribable feeling crept up Olver's spine. From the intelligence they garnered so far, it was easy to

tell how abnormal that Knight Order was. The true identity of the ‘Highway Demon’ was enough to prove this point. “If that is the case, we don’t need to remain still. Wouldn’t it be better to take the initiative?” Olver shook his head as if he was shaking off a sudden chill, rejecting the suggestion. “No, we won’t do anything for now. Remember to continue to collect intelligence in the future, too.” “Would that be fine? You were so suspicious then, but you are not making any moves.” “It is precisely because I was suspicious back then. I am not a Knight, but as a man serving His Majesty, it is in poor taste to stop him from finding entertainment. I feel a bit sorry for Gaizka though.” After troubling over it for a while, he clapped his hand and said: “That’s right, could you mobilise ‘Alvanz’?” “Alvanz? You want to have a battle with them?” “This is just a cautionary move. They seem to be several steps ahead of us. Since we couldn’t catch up no matter how we struggle, we have to make up for it this way.” “... I understand.” The man bowed and left the room quietly. Olver fell into deep thought at his table and stood up reluctantly after making up his mind. “Alright, if I don’t show up, they will say I am lazy. It is difficult for a man who has to keep up appearances.” He took the bandana hanging besides him and wrapped it around his head, covering his ears. After finishing his preparation, he took heavy and irate steps towards the workshop. The incident started from a letter detailing an order from the King. “I wish to confirm the capability of the new model you submitted in your reports, and will be holding a closed door exhibition in the Royal Capital Känkänen, the itinerary is as follows...” When the staff of NTR Lab heard this news, they accepted it gleefully. The specs of Karrdator Dash was better than the previous mass produced models, it was hard to make comparisons, but taking the combined figures from offence and defence, they were confident it will produce twice the performance. This wasn’t an exaggeration; the Dash had the capability to handle a variety of problems, and could enter battles without any issues. It won’t be benchmarked against the personal machine of Knight Commanders, but if placed in a fight, Dash would probably win if both sides had equal numbers. Confident of success, they sent a platoon of ten Karrdator Dashes to the exhibition. Royal Capital Känkänen. This city uses the gentle slope of Mount Aubigne as natural walls, built in the style of a fortress. The ‘Royal Guard Knights’ was garrisoned in this city, a unit serving directly under the King. They had their own facilities in Känkänen, including a training arena outside the city. The prototype Silhouette Knights made by NTR Lab were heading there. In the centre of the arena was an even ground surrounded by audience seats in a shape of a bowl. One corner that was elevated much higher was the VIP seats and the figure of King Ambrosius could be seen there. As the exhibition was not made open to the public, there wasn’t many people present. Marquis Joachim Serrati and Duke Knut Dixgard were both present. “The new models developed by NTR Lab...” “Yes, I heard it was based off the foundation of ‘that’ prototype. We will see the details later, but from the summary I heard, the performance far exceeds the Karrdator.” They watched the unfamiliar machines march into the arena. The Karrdator Dash moved smoothly without any hint of stiffness. After seeing Tellestarle that loses control easily, it was a major improvement. Joachim gave NTR Lab his generous compliments. The audience around them started discussing the new models. Just hearing about their performance beforehand was enough to pique their interests. “... Oh, so that’s the new models. Using the Karrdator as the foundation, it has the strong appearance of Cardiarria. And the Silhouette Arms on its back! They could fire without using their hands right?” “Not just that, I heard it could match that huge and powerful ‘Hymerwort’ from the

Red Rabbits in strength.” “Oh! That one is known for its strength in our country... The future is bright.” The heated atmosphere of the audience showed no signs of cooling down. Joachim looked at all these faces and realised someone who should be here was missing. “Duke Dixgard, why aren’t ‘they’ here? After all, they contributed to the development of the new models; I don’t think His Majesty will leave...” Joachim had to stop mid-sentence because Knut, who was sitting beside him, suddenly held his temple and looked towards the sky. Using his strong mental restraint, Knut squeezed out a reply bitterly: “... You will find out soon enough.” With these words, Joachim was certain nothing good will come of this. The King of Fremmevira, Ambrosius Tahvo Fremmevira inspected the formation of the Silhouette Knights from the centre of the VIP seats. “... And this is the result. What do you think Your Majesty? The new look of the well known mass produced Karrdator of our nation. Compared to the previous models, the Karrdator Dash excels in all areas. All the staff of NTR Lab are honoured to have taken part in the development of this excellent product.” “Good, as expected of the best craftsmen in our nation, well done.” After listening to the briefing by Olver Blomdahl, the director of NTR Lab, Ambrosius smiled. Gaizka who was standing behind him was listening tensely. “No wonder you are so confident. For this exhibition, I have found an adequate ‘opponent’ that will allow your machines to showcase their capabilities.” Ambrosius laughter seemed to have some hidden meaning behind it, while Olver could only reply with a wry smile. Aside from Olver who investigated beforehand, other people assumed he meant for the Royal Guard Knights to simulate a battle with them. “By the way, the prototype the new model is based on was built by students, right? Do you want to meet its creators?” The people around him started feeling confused; this development was unusual. They were thinking the two of them were talking about different things. The King’s words seemed to be implying that the opponent was— “He seems to be proposing a match, letting people from different backgrounds to spar with their own creations.” The sound of a horse galloping could be heard from somewhere; that was the sound of horsehooves hitting the ground. But the sound was too heavy and loud for normal horses. “Open the gates! They will be here soon! The ones who laid the foundation for the new model and formed a new Knight Order by my decree!” The Cardiaris of the Royal Guard Knights moved to open the gates leading into the arena. The gate was wide enough for five Silhouette Knights to walk side by side, and something could be seen charging in and kicking up a dust cloud. The continuous sound of hooves showed no signs of halting. Everyone concentrated at the gate, wondering what will come forth. Ambrose raised his hands, announcing their name. “Come... Silver Phoenix Knights!” The moment ‘that’ appeared, screams shook the entire arena. “What...!! What is that thing!?” Everyone in the audience seats and maintenance workshop shouted and stood up. The ones remaining seated did so because they lost the strength in their legs. ‘That thing’ majestically passes through the gate loudly and with a cloud of dust. What captured the gaze of the crowd was both a man and a horse, large enough to rival a duel level Demon Beast. Its lower body reached the shoulders of a Silhouette Knight; the four legs supporting it contained endless power. Right now, that astonishingly heavy giant body was moving forward with a fast rhythm. What surprised the audience the most was the ‘human torso’ coming out from where the head of the horse should be. The alien combining man with horse. A monster unlike Demon Beasts that should only belong in fairy tales. They recovered from the huge surprise and calmed down, understanding its true identity. The armour covering the Centaur Knight, and horn

protruding from its head and the beautiful arrangement of its plate armours made it clear that it wasn't a product of nature, but a man-made masterpiece. With a halberd in its right hand and a shield that was broader at the bottom in its other hand. The crowd couldn't believe their eyes, but they reach this final conclusion— This is a man-made product. Like Silhouette Knights, this was a giant built by man. A chill different from before travelled down their spines and they focused on the thing being towed by the Centaur Knight. That object obscured by the dust was a cart made from steel and wood, large objects covered by clothes could be seen on it. Cargo ferried by the giant Centaur Knight the size of a duel level Demon Beast. Everyone thought of the same thing— these must be Silhouette Knights. “Fufu, wahahaha... well done, Ernesti! That's the talent I see in you! I didn't expect you to make it to this stage! Interesting, so interesting!!” The thing that pulled everyone back to reality was the laughter of the King. They now remember what the King said— the creators of the prototype, the newly formed Knight Order— the existence of the Silver Phoenix Knights. They knew this was beyond the level of NTR Lab developing the new model— this day, history will change. The pilots of Tzendorg, Chid and Ady didn't know about the screams from the audience. They followed the procedure and started doing their task after reaching the destination. “Release the wagon; change the connecting parts into braking mode.” “The movement script is entering its final phase! Keep the Towing Anchor and maintain braking distance!!” The audience might not be able to see clearly from afar, but right now, Tzendorg was releasing the four cables connected it to the wagon, reeling it back into its body. The brakes of the wagon activated and they slowed down. Sparks flew from the wheels and the shrill sound from the friction echoed in the surroundings. At the same time, the sub arms connected to the wagon started extending, allowing Tzendorg to pull away from the wagon. The wagon started slowing down and stopped behind Tzendorg with the connectors extended to maximum length. “Distance okay, final separation!” The structure of the connectors was similar to the sub arms. The secured parts broke away from Tzendorg one by one before folding to the side of the wagon. The brakes continued slowing the wagon down and it stopped in a cloud of smoke shortly after. The cargo that was still earlier started moving after the wagon stopped. With clanking sounds, the wires securing the cargo unfastened, freeing the cargo— giants that were in a kneeling position began standing up. Bright red armour basked under the sun, taking off its dust cover as if it was a cloak. This elegant machine seemed strange with Silhouette Arms shaped like broad short swords on its back and four swords on its waist. The one standing up beside him was a brilliantly white armoured machine, having an appearance of a prototype machine because of its rugged shape. But its solid body would definitely be accompanied with tremendous power output. As for the last machine, it was the same model as the white machine but without any paint at all, showing its original green steel colour. The only difference would be the large layered armour protruding out from the shoulders. The moment the three Silhouette Knights stood up on the wagon, Tzendorg slowed down by making a detour. The green machine walked forward, welcoming the returning Tzendorg. The arena suddenly turned so quiet you could hear a pin drop as the tension rises. All eyes fell on the Centaur Knight and the three Knights standing in a row. The three Knights came before the VIP seats and adopt a standby position, kneeling on one knee. Appearing from the chest armour that opened up were two young pilots; the one exiting the green Knight was a young boy. The audience sat stiffly in their seats, not sure how to react. In the silence, the sound of air decompressing could be

heard. The kneeling Centaur Knight had also opened its cockpit. Not its waist, but the position equivalent to the horse's back slightly behind the human torso opened widely, and a boy and a girl stepped out. It was unclear why there were two people in there. After confirming everyone was present, the boy piloting the green Knight represented the group and performed a Knight's salute elegantly. "By Your Majesty's order, the Silver Phoenix Knight's Knight Commander, Ernesti Echevarria, together with 1st Platoon Captain Edgar C. Blanche, 2nd Platoon Captain Dietrich Cunitz, as well as the latest Centaur Knight Tzendorg are here to report." With his silvery purple hair swaying in the wind, Eru raised his head with a face full of smiles. No matter how you look at it, he was like a kid who was flaunting his toy. His appearance was definitely that of a kid. "Thank you for your hard work, Ernesti. I see you brought something interesting with you. I want to grill you carefully about them." Seeing the two of them laughing ominously, the people around them wore a complicated expression. It had nothing to do with their status, just that no one was able to interject into their conversation. The alien shaped machine reflected the brilliant sunlight as it sprinted proudly in the arena. The heavy hooves resounded loudly, with every step as loud as thunder, shaking the eardrums of the audience. They forgot to blink as they stared at the strongest and largest Silhouette Knight controlled by men, the Centaur Knight that had a shape largely different from a man— Tzendorg. The audience wasn't the only ones watching Tzendorg. The pilots of the Karrdator Dash standing in the same arena were also studying Tzendorg curiously. "Look Zwar, that's amazing, a horse shaped Silhouette Knight." "No wonder Sir 'Watchmen' wanted us to come... 'Apprentice' are not to be underestimated." "That's right, but did the Watchmen get played? It is not the exhibition of our new models anymore, this looks like the stage for the other party to perform." After hearing the snickers from the machine besides him, he crossed his arms and stared at the Centaur Knight displayed on the Holo Monitor. "Hard to say... To summon us mean he didn't only get played. More importantly, we should use this chance to think of a way to deal with that thing." "I thought we drew the worst lot but somehow... it seems to be getting interesting." The eye crystal of the Karrdator Dash glimmered as it kept on taking in images, not missing any movement of the Centaur Knight. The pilots seemed detached from the noise of the crowds. What they need to concentrate on was the shape of the enemy, what they need to know was the movement of the foe. The battle surely and silently entered into its prologue stage. The rowdy audience couldn't know about the nervousness of the pilots. Most of the guests were nobles and their curiosity were completely on the alien machine pacing around the arena, and the Silver Phoenix Knight that made that monster. Despite the existence of the NTR Lab, a new organisation was still formed— What they were concerned about was the intention of the King. A normal Knight Order won't stir their curiosity. About a year ago, they suffered a large scale attack from foreign forces, they all knew about this. In order to avoid making the same mistake, increasing a Knight Orders or two would not be surprising. However, the Silver Phoenix Knights can't be judged by common logic. The attack, the new models and a new Knight Order. They were part of a massive game formed from these fragments. In that case, what would the next card show? The initiative was in the hand of their King, so they perked up their ears to listen, not daring to miss anything. Their tense emotions were like a rain cloud passing swiftly, only leaving behind a cool, quiet breeze. It wasn't that they were not curious, but even if they wanted to, they couldn't interrogate the King. Hence they had no choice but to keep quiet; that was how the nobles were feeling.

Ambrose smiled as he watch the running Tzendorg and suddenly turn to look at Olver besides him. “You don’t seem very surprised.” “That isn’t so, Your Majesty. I might have heard of the Demon Beast terrorising the vicinity of Laihiala, but I would never have thought that it would be a new type of Silhouette Knight. This scene was definitely shocking for me.” A complicated expression flashed across Olver’s narrowed eyes, but it disappeared before others could notice. He resumed his usual demeanour, his unmoved attitude making him stand out even more. “Your are well informed as usual. Did you bring Alvanz along?” Ambrose asked quietly. Answering with just his eyes, Olver nodded slightly. “It is the same thing with the new model; I want to use this chance to test ‘their’ capability. Don’t think they are just kids, they had experienced many trying encounters.” He muttered so softly it was as if he was talking to himself, there was no telling if it reached the ears of Olver who was beside him. If not for his keen ears, Olver would definitely have missed it. “I think they are just right as your opponents. Well done, the stage seemed to have been set.” “I am honoured.” Olver lowered his head deeply. “Before that, I will need to explain who they are...” Ambrose wasn’t saying that to anyone in particular. After a short wait, knocking was heard from the door to the VIP seats, announcing the arrival of the Silver Phoenix Knights. The room turned tense as everyone focused on the door. The well oiled door opened slowly without a sound. Footsteps dented the carpet slightly as the guests entered. Knight Commander of the Silver Phoenix Knights who introduced himself— Ernesti Echevarria, 1st Platoon Captain Edgar C. Blanche and 2nd Platoon Captain Dietrich Cunitz presented themselves. The nobles seated swallowed the moans they almost uttered out. Normally, they would have started scrutinising their appearance. The two young men walking at the sides— Edgar and Dietrich were still acceptable. From their equipment and well toned body, they look the part of an excellent Knight, but it wasn’t obvious they were more valuable than normal pilots. The problem lies with their Commander Ernesti. The first impression he gave was ‘young and short’. His silvery purple hair of medium length swayed with each step he took, his feminine appearance matched his petite body well. No one would doubt it if he was introduced as the daughter of some noble family. And he was actually a Knight Commander reporting directly to the King, what a terrible joke that was. None of them had the eyes to discern his extraordinary talents. Even basked in the gaze heavy enough to overwhelm a man, Eru showed no sign of being fazed. His clear eyes looked straight at the King with determination. “I am as you have command, bringing the newest model Tzendorg as well as Karrdators and Tellestarle equipped with Option Works for your review.” “Thank you for your efforts.” The content of their dialogue stirred the curiosity of the bystanders further. The Tzendorg he mentioned was probably referring to the Centaur Knight. That was intriguing, but what does the other term ‘Option Works’ mean? Was he still hiding something— It was safe to say the crowd had fallen into the King’s trap. The NTR Lab had shown their cards, but the other party still had cards in their hands. It was clear who had the initiative at this stage. Ambrosius understood the interest and bafflement around him, he wasn’t sure he had concealed his own smile. The King couldn’t hold back his mischievous heart; his joy was on the verge of bursting out of his chest. Next will the time to reveal the answer, and decide the standing between the NTR Lab and the Silver Phoenix Knights. Making such a big scene to flaunt wasn’t because he wanted to be pull a prank— well, he did wish for that a little— but this was setting up the stage for the discussion that will follow. The situation was overwhelming one-sided. “Ladies and gentlemen, this child

here is Ernesti Echevarria... the grandson of Laihiala Pilot Academy dean Lauri, and the designer of the prototype and Centaur Knight. I had also appointed him as the Knight Commander of the Silver Phoenix Knights.” And that was how it should have proceeded— “...You, a kid like you is the designer...!!” — Until that man interrupted the King. The chief of the 1st R&D workshop of NTR Lab— Gaizka Johansson pulled at his messy white hair as he stepped forward with bloodshot eyes. It was obvious he was mentally unstable, plain for all to see when he rebutted his superior— the King. “No... that’s wrong!! It, it is impossible for that thing to move, there, there must be something else, did someone teach this to you? No, it is made by someone else right!? No, it is impossible to make this. Why? What is going on...!?” He was no longer aware of his surroundings as he kept mumbling as he closed in on Eru. Ambrosius showed a troubled expression when he saw that Gaizka had lost it. Oh, was the medicine too strong...? I just wanted to stir his competitive spirit though. After troubling over it momentarily, he wondered if stopping him verbally would work. But seeing Gaizka falling into complete confusion, Ambrosius doubted he could communicate with him and decided to give up. When he was about to issue the order to restrain him, he locked his eyes with Eru who seemed to have something to say. The curious Ambrosius closed his half opened mouth and gave his permission with a look. Eru turned to face Gaizka, who was mumbling nonsense. Edgar and Dietrich, who was beside him tensed up, ready to intercept if necessary. Even if dwarfs are strong, he still couldn’t win against two Knights. “Tzendorg is installed with two Ether Reactors.” The two of them were within arms reach when Eru said these words directly to Gaizka. After making a weird sound, Gaizka stood stiff on the spot. At the same time, Olver’s eyes also widened with a surprised expression, a rare sight to behold. After a brief moment, the people around them understood what Eru meant and the shocked expressions spread out like a ripple. “Do you know why that is for?” Eru asked with his head tilted, smiling brilliantly. In contrast, Gaizka maintained his stupid posture and took a long while to recover. “That, that... I see, it’s too big, so one reactor can’t support it... You have to go this far to...” Gaizka mumbled as the light of sanity returned to his eyes. To answer a question, what was needed was logic. No matter how fascinating it may be, things created through technology could be explained through theory and knowledge. ‘The centaur monster with two hearts’— this fact was a big shock for him, but further questions and thirst for knowledge swelled up to his heart. “Right, you can maintain its structure that way... However, it still won’t move. It’s not enough, you did something else, too, right?” “Well, I used a lot of different ideas... Eh, how about letting me explain with the design plans. Edgar-senpai, Di-senpai, if you don’t mind.” Edgar moved with a resigned face and silently opened the luggage beside him. Dietrich also unpacks the box he brought along and set up an easel with a board on it. Eru took out and pasted pieces of paper really fast, and smiled like a beautiful flower blossoming. “Let me explain for everyone! First would be the foundation structure...” “Hey, wait you dummy, don’t ignore me and proceed on your own.” And of course, the one who stopped the lecture a second before it started was Ambrosius. The crowd who was led on before they knew it realised what was happening. “Please listen to me, too, Your Majesty! It’s fine, I prepared the briefing materials for everyone. Without missing any detail, let’s go through this step by step...!!” “How is it fine? I will listen to you later, keep those things quickly.” Edgar and Dietrich silently kept the easel and papers deftly. Eru watched them with a sense of pity. “Gaizka, you go back too.” “...!! Ah, ahh, my sincere apologies... I lost my composure...” “Ara, seems that the

medicine was too strong. Forget it; listen carefully since you have regained your wits.” Seeing Gaizka on his knees and about to bang his head on the floor, Ambrosius dismissed him nonchalantly. “Pu, hehe, fufufu...” It must be hard to hold it in. Ambrosius sighed as the sound of laughter broke out besides him, he turned towards the man besides him and said. “Et tu, Olver?” “My humble apologies. Ara, I was wondering what kind of child he would be, to think he would be so intriguing... and it is not every day you can see a talent that can make Your Majesty speechless.” Ambrosius responded casually to Olver who lowered his head with a smile. The tension earlier was all gone, replaced by a warm atmosphere. Ambrosius pulled himself together, cleared his throat and change the atmosphere in the room. “You are right, going through the process step by step will be better. Speaking of which, this all started when Ernesti made a Silhouette Knight because of his hobby...” Something out of place seemed to be mixed in, but wasn’t elaborated on. “Everyone already knows what happened next, which is the prototype theft incident. We don’t know how the rats found out, but it is a pity the prototypes were stolen. Fortunately, the creator himself is fine, so I ordered the formation of the Silver Phoenix Knights. This Knight Order will develop Silhouette Knights for this kid and also act as his escorts.” Hearing the rationale behind the raising of this Knight Order, everyone nodded their heads in comprehension, but thought about another question immediately. “I understand, Your Majesty, but if it is a Knight Order, why not let him join NTR Lab? I think it would be fine to use the Silver Phoenix Knights purely as bodyguards.” Ambrosius grunted in response to Olver’s question which got straight to the heart of the matter. The luggage bag Edgar was holding had somehow ended up in Eru’s arms, waiting anxiously for his turn to take the stage. Ambrosius stopped him with a look, and was hesitant on what to say. “He is still a kid after all. I don’t know how receptive you all would be... But right now, I wonder if dumping him into NTR was the better choice.” When everyone heard this it sounded really convincing. “After seeing the Silhouette Knights made by both sides, I feel that having two independent organisation isn’t too bad. The creation of this kid is a great stimulant for you all, right?” The gaze of the King made the gloomy Gaizka back away. “...Yes! It’s just as Your Majesty said...” “That is part of it, there is another reason. The works of this kid is interesting... But it is not user friendly. Gaizka, how was the prototype before you all modified it?” “Yes, well... with strong crystal tissue and revolutionary equipment, it was a powerful machine. However, eh... it is hard to control, drains mana and is a wild horse.” When they heard this, Edgar and Dietrich nodded in agreement. “I think so, too. That Tzendorg is probably piloted in some unorthodox method.” “Not really, we only used ‘double pilot’.” “... How is that normal? Eh, as you can see, Ernesti’s creation has many good points, but lacks maturity. It’s like a raw diamond. Without polishing it, you can’t see its true value. And NTR Lab is the best place to perform the polishing.” Olver lured the snake out of the hole. “Your Majesty, do you mean for us to ‘tweak’ their prototypes so it could be used by others?” “To be honest, that’s the plan. I am counting on you, Olver.” Including Olver, everyone lowered their heads. And so, the existence of the Silver Phoenix Knights was made known to the world, and the name Ernesti started spreading between the nobles of Fremira Kingdom from those in attendance. This name had the following note attached: ‘Knight Commander of the Silver Phoenix Knights, Ernesti Echevarria has incredible research and development ability and incredibly loves Silhouette Knights.’ Shortly after the discussion ended— “Ladies and gentlemen, now that you know more about them, next would be that Centaur Knight. We

will be having a training match between the Silver Phoenix Knights and NTR Lab. Both sides please prepare yourself.” The Silver Phoenix Knights walked towards the arena by Ambrosius’ orders, the conversation between Gaizka and Eru could be heard constantly as they walk along the corridor. As a veteran technician, Gaizka had a stronger thirst for unknown technology than anyone else. Meeting Eru who couldn’t stop talking about his interest, their dialogue naturally continued all the way to the workshop. The audience was no longer as agitated as before as they discuss the upcoming clash of the machines made by both organizations, no different than a crowd watching a show. In the calm atmosphere, Olver who remained in the VIP seats thought carefully about the future of NTR Lab. For the Lab, that scene earlier was as good as taking the important task of developing prototypes away from them. It seems to be a huge blow at first glance, but it was a good deal if they see it from another angle. That uncontrollable child was responsible for the development of the prototypes, and was also a Knight Commander reporting directly to the King. In other words, the King plans to hold the reign himself. From what he just observed, the child was talented, but had a strong personality. Instead of keeping such a hot potato with him, it would be better to leave it to the King. And since his creation has a lot of issue to resolve, there will still be a chance for NTR Lab to shine and they will remain irreplaceable. That might be so, but when Olver thought about how to explain it to his subordinates, he couldn’t help feeling down. Although Olver fell into deep thought, his sensitive ears didn’t miss the sound calling out to him. Lifting his head, he turned to the King seated beside him. “Olver, I will be bringing him to ‘Home’ in the near future.” As expected— Olver who suspected as much understood his intent behind this decision. He struggled to keep a straight face. “Your Majesty has high expectations of this child.” “He had done more than enough... And I made a promise— ‘present accomplishments great enough to be rewarded with the secret of Ether Reactors’. As a King, I can’t go back on my words.” Olver closed his eyes and thought about what he should do. Ambrosius was definitely not pushing Olver to do his bidding. Or rather, his attitude seemed too cautious towards one of his vassals. “... Since this is Your Majesty’s request, I will relay your wish to ‘Home’ with my role as a Watchmen. But the one to make the decision would be ‘Master’... This might be an order from Your Majesty, but I hope you can follow the ‘Law’.” “Of course. But after seeing such an interesting fellow, Master will definitely not reject him.” Olver responded with a warm smile. The two of them turned to face the teams spreading out on the arena to signify the end of their conversation. “We will now begin the training match between NTR Lab and the Silver Phoenix Knights. To balance the both sides, the Silver Phoenix Knights will be deploying one fireteam of Knights (three machines) and one cavalry! NTR Lab would be sending out two fireteams of Knight (six machines)!!” With cheers erupting in the background, Ambrosius announce the rules of the competition loudly. Inside the arena, Dietrich muttered unhappily, in contrast with the heated audience. “Tzendorg is treated to be equivalent to three Knights, one cavalry to three infantry... Does this ratio apply to Silhouette Knights?” “Who knows. The NTR Lab are using the enhanced version of our machines, and three of them... To be honest, the situation is bad.” The Silver Phoenix Knight’s forces are Dietrich’s modified Guyale and Tellestarles piloted by Edgar and Eru— made by modifying Karrdators. The three machines might look different on the outside, but they were all basically the same Tellestarle models. In contrast, the Karrdators of the NTR Lab was a totally new design using Tellestarle as its foundation. Comparing the two, NTR Lab had better performance.

“How exciting! I wonder how well they tamed the wild Tellestarle? The controls seemed to be improved greatly... that’s right; I will ask them to let me try it later!” “... Ahhh, you are acting carefree as always, it is making me envious.” Seeing Eru’s off topic comment made Dietrich shook his head and sigh. “Forget it, we also modified the machines ever since.” The arms on Guyale was one size bigger, Edgar’s machine with its armour coat and Eru’s machine that had some mysterious equipment built in. Their machines were not the original Tellestarle either. With the top tier Option Works installed, their machines were also enhanced. “Erm, what about us?” “We need to take on three machines?” The voices of the twins came from Tzendorg behind them. Tzendorg might be the strongest unit in the Silver Phoenix Knights, but it was also the most unstable element. This was the first time the twins were fighting, it was hard to know what to expect. “Well... should we play it safe or...” “About that, Edgar-senpai, Di-senpai, could you do something reckless?” The two smiled fearlessly in their pilot seats as they listened to the instructions of their Knight Commander. The horns echoed loudly through the training arena, and the gong announcing the start of the battle was sounded, which was followed by the cheers from the crowd. “Let the battle begin—!!” With this signal, the giant Knights charged with earth shattering steps. The Silver Phoenix Knights made the first move. The three Knights started running with Tzendorg matching their speed behind. As for the NTR Lab—the Knight Order Alvanz piloting Karrdator Dash watched their adversary carefully. Their Captain Arnis sneered when he saw how the Silver Phoenix Knight moved. “They plan to attack at the same time...? As expected. Lance wall formation, forward march.” The two fireteams formed ranks, raised their shields and lances, and advanced slowly. This formation was obviously meant to counter the cavalry like Tzendorg, a common tactic against Demon Beasts that attack with powerful charges. The tip of the lances might be blunt, but its strong mighty thrust was enough to intimidate their foes. The Silver Phoenix Knights accelerated closer and Tzendorg at the back of the formation broke off to the side and started sprinting, overtaking the three units in front. “Fireteam two turn right, maintain Lance wall formation. Fireteam one, prepare to engage!!” With Tzendorg charging, Alvanz split their group in two—one fireteam to engage Tzendorg with lances, and one fireteam that abandoned their lance to take on the other three Knights. Lances were effective against enemy charging in, but ineffective against Knights proficient in melee combat. The two fireteams of Alvanz commit to their assigned roles to take advantage in the strength of numbers. The audience watching also thought it would be divided into a clash of infantry and an anti-cavalry battle—but the next second, one of the Silver Phoenix Knights made a strange move. “Magi Jet Thrusters activate... deploying device, begin air compression...” Suddenly, a strange noise that was definitely not cheering from the crowd erupted. The air gathered in a vortex, emitting a unique shrill noise, several times louder than the air intake valve of an Ether Reactor. The noise came from one of the Silver Phoenix Knights’ machine. The machine with raw unpainted metallic body had additional equipment installed on the shoulders and waist. The movable armour parts moved to the back. Inside the layered armour, a valve slowly open, creating a vacuum inside which was completely covered with engravings. When they saw this, confusion spread among the audience. Why shift the armour? Wouldn’t it expose the vital parts? No one knew what the equipment making weird sound was used for. However, such suspicious movement naturally put Alvanz on guard. “What... is that?” “He is gathering air... A Silhouette Arms that fires air bullets? Probably a new type of weapon... I don’t

get it.” “Tuva, Idola, be alert of anything that comes flying over. They are almost within range; we will counter them with the Silhouette Arms.” The first fireteam that didn’t equip spears activated the back weapons on their Karrdator Dash. The second fireteam with back weapons did the same. Tzendorg which was moving at a high speed was charging by itself, and will enter the Silhouette Arms’ range soon. A strange thing happened the moment before they clashed. The green Knight bent its knees and lowered its posture. The machine under its full control moved as it was commanded— Eru’s will used the power of the strand crystal tissue without reservation. The machine took a step forward, and crimson flames shot out from it at the same instant. The additional equipment produced a long trail of fire, together with bright lights and the sound of an explosion, bestowed extraordinary force to the accelerating machine. The giant object five times larger than a man made of steel and crystal tissue shot out like a magic bullet with amazing speed. The flame tail only appeared briefly, transforming into heat waves with the second step of the green Knight, blurring the space behind it. When it came off the second step, flames appeared again. And of course, the Knight was propelled with even more force. “Zarks —!! Careful!! He is heading towards...!!” While everyone was still panicking over this bizarre scene, the leader of first fireteam realised something. The speed of the green Knight was abnormal, surpassing even the leading Tzendorg as it closed in on Alvanz. That’s right; he was going for the second fireteam with the spears. “What.. what is with this fellow!?” “Spears will be too slow! Shoot!!” Facing the green Knight that was faster than a bullet, the second fireteam which were focusing on Tzendorg reacted late. Despite that, they fired their Silhouette Arms and engaged them. Despite the suddenness of the situation, the bullets were still aimed at the green Knight, displaying their exceptional skill. Before the second fireteam leader could compose himself, a calm part of his mind was certain the enemy’s effort would be futile. That abnormally fast attack was commendable, but he won’t be able to dodge with that speed. His speed will lead to his own demise. Regrettably, the performance of the green Knight exceeded his imagination. The pilot Eru has excellent physical ability and spent most of his time training for high speed combat, developing fast reflexes and calculation abilities, allowing the machine to react very quickly. The additional equipment on the shoulder of the green Knight known as Magi Jet Thrusters, changed the direction it was facing and shot out a burst of light with the sound of an explosion. The machine shifted laterally as it continued its advance. “Ahh?” The movement of their foe stunned the second fireteam. The magic bullet that was already locked on target carried on their path, passing through the space beside the green Knight without even touching it. “Wahhhhhh!?” The white blade flashed by the moment the green Knight made it to the left flank of the second fireteam; the astonishing speed produced a power that could match the charge of a Duel level Demon Beast. Philia’s machine was saved by the shield held in its left hand, but the shield was sent flying, toppling Philia’s machine which fell slowly to the ground. “Philia! Shit, I will stop him, Yunf, you...” “Zarks, that’s not the only enemy, don’t be rash.” His comrade’s words reminded Zarks of the enemy they were supposed to be dealing with. The Centaur Knight was hidden by the explosion created by the green Knight, and was right before them. Kicking up a dust storm, the charging cavalry came at them ferociously. The second fireteam disrupted by the attack of the green Knight couldn’t maintain their formation— Zarks made this snap judgement and shouted: “Dodge!” and leapt out of the way. Yunf mimic his action unhesitantly. Tzendorg charged past the space they evaded from, bashing

with its shield as it passed by. Yunf blocked with its shield to minimise the damage. Using this chance, the green Knight attempted to slow its machine down. It planted its feet firmly down and changed the direction of the Magi Jet Thruster. Instead of an instant, it fired for a substantial amount of time, slowing down by shooting in the opposite direction. In the cloud of dust, the green Knight stopped moving in a centre of a heat wave. When it slowly turned its head back, what it saw was the second fireteam that was on the verge of defeat. “Are, are you kidding me...?” The pitiful state of the second fireteam and the green Knight that caused all this made the fighting spirit of first fireteam plummet. They attempt to reinforce them, but were stopped by Arnis. “Calm down! The other Knights are approaching, if you go to the second fireteam now, our backs will be exposed!” This reminded them of the other two ‘infantry’. The attack from the green Knight had completely diverted their attention. “We should advance right away. It’s three on two here, we have to dispatch them fast! Zarks and the others won’t be taken out that easily, after taking that beating, they will strengthen their defense.” He sounded a bit anxious, but the three Karrdator Dash started moving, closing the distance with the Silver Phoenix Knights in a blink of an eye. “Idola, look out for that green one! Stop him if you hear that noise!!” With Arnis and Tuva leading the way, the Knights fired their back weapons; the white machine of the Silver Phoenix Knights moved forth to intercept. When the barrage of bullets was about to hit it, the armour near the shoulders of the white Knight moved. The sub arms moved the armour plate to the front, forming a shield. The white Knight in total defense mode did not slow down as it deflected all the bullets. “So that is not a normal machine either...” “The green Knight is not moving, now is the chance. That strange armour might not be able to cover its entire body!” The three Alvanz machines kept up the pressure with their barrage as they entered sword range. This time, the red machine came out of the white machine’s shadow— No shield, a heavily offense type machine. With its arm raised, it took a swing at Tuva. Tuva lifted his shield in anticipation of the blow and took a stance— but it didn’t expect something that flew out from its gauntlet with the sound of an explosion. Tuva’s machine couldn’t evade this sneak attack and got hit in the face by a piece of metal. The impact affected the eye crystal, distorting half of the holo monitor’s view. “Just how many weird equipment do they have!!” Using the chance while Tuva retreated, the red machine changed its target to Idola, forcing it back. Arnis engaged the white machine and put some distance between them. “I... can’t take him down!” Arnis gritted his teeth. Alvanz has the advantage in number, but the red and white machine built for offence and defense respectively were hard to handle. At this moment, the sound of air being sucked could be heard; the green Knight had started moving. “This is dangerous... Idola, guard the back. Tuva, you good?” “No problems with movement at all! I will make them pay... Let’s go!” Alvanz renewed their attack. The red and white Knights prepared to fend off their assault. Before the start of the battle. On the brown training arena grounds, two opposing forces comprising of the latest models of Silhouette Knights observe each other relentlessly without a word. In the middle of the Silver Phoenix Knight’s ground, Tzendorg which was a head taller than the other Silhouette Knights could be seen. From his wide field of vision, the appearance of the enemy Karrdator Dash was clearly shown. Their armour was much more polished than the Karrdator. The battle was about to commence. Chid and Ady who were inside Tzendorg couldn’t sit still. They felt a different kind of tension from their fight in Silhouette Gear. Thinking back, they only fought with everything they had with no tactics in mind and without caring about the

rules and etiquette. In contrast, they have the heavy responsibility of showcasing Tzendorg's power in this mock battle. The difference between these two situations could not be explained so simply with words. According to Edgar's explanation, the enemy had six machines since Tzendorg was treated to be the equivalent to three machines. This meant they had to win their opponents elegantly. There was some distance between the audience seat and the training grounds, but the twins still felt the illusion of everyone on the field was focusing on them. As the tension ran high, Eru continued to speak nonchalantly: "I have a selfish request. Edgar-senpai, Di-senpai, could you do something reckless?" How would Tzendorg's battle be related to the two of them acting recklessly? But Eru had always been like this, saying things that didn't make sense. "Since you asked, you must have thought about something. Let's hear it." "Very simple. First, we will split Tzendorg and us to probe their reaction. They might divide their forces as the tactics against Tellestarle and Tzendorg are totally different... They will probably react to what we do." The heads of the red and white machines nodded. All this was within their expectations, and the enemy will probably expect this. "From our perspective, we let Tzendorg act alone in order to utilise its advantage in speed. But if it faces off against three machines as stipulated, Tzendorg will have a tough battle no matter how fast it is... so we should use a surprise attack and send one person to strike against the group facing Tzendorg." "I understand, so you are volunteering yourself?" Edgar's machine turned its head and Eru's Tellestarle entered its view—on its shoulders and waist were movable Magi Jet Thrusters. The customised Magi Jet Thrusters were installed with multiple miniaturised thrusters, making output adjustment easier. The movable design realised the possibility of 360 degrees of mobility, an intimidating equipment. But on the contrary, the difficult controls were not on the level of 'a burden on the pilot'. In fact, it had become a flawed product only Eru could pilot. "Yes, I will fully utilise the mobility of this machine and disrupt the forces targeting Tzendorg before returning to the battle between Knights... I don't really need to say this, but our forces in the Knights' battle would be weakened significantly. I hope Edgar-senpai and Di-senpai could hang on until I return." Their opponent would definitely not be expecting such a forceful method. A surprise tactic only Eru, piloting the machine with Magi Thruster Jet could pull off to destroy the balance between the two sides. The difference in numbers were still great, this battle was too difficult. "Alright, I will give it my all." "Since it is the Knight Commander's orders..." Edgar and Dietrich glanced at each other and agreed. The Karrdator Dash prototype developed by the NTR Lab were not to be underestimated. Even though they agreed readily, the burden wasn't as simple as it looked. "So this is what it means to lead the charge? So we just need to follow behind Eru?" "Leave it to us! We will show them the speed of Tzen-chan!!" Instead, the ones to relax were the twins. They witnessed the power of the Magi Jet Thrusters before, and couldn't stop smiling when they imagined the opponents being scared out of their wits. "We are in a great condition; let's give them a huge surprise!" "Eh, before you come back, I will hide behind Edgar. Please settle it before he goes down." "Di, you..." Ady giggled and the atmosphere lightened. Chid and Ady's nervousness disappeared before they realised it. Eru had outrageous ideas as usual, but Edgar and Dietrich who could control him firmly were also here, there were no companions more reliable than them. The white Tellestarle and Guyale formed ranks and gave each other a look. The two of them already realised the reason why Eru was forcing the attack. They were the senpais after all and veterans in battles. The Tellestarle piloted

by Eru aside, part of their job was to help rookies get a first taste of victory. When they ended their meeting in high spirits, the horn signaling the start of the battle was sounded. “Well then, let’s go.” The Centaur Knight in the middle neighed jokingly. With the sounding of the gong, the Silver Phoenix Knights charged together. Right now, Ernesti was sighing on the pilot seat of the green Knight. “Hmmm, I thought this might happen, but it really depleted the entire mana pool.” Eru and his green partner followed the battle plan and conducted a high speed assault with the Magi Jet Thrusters. He successfully took down one enemy unit and dealt a blow to their morale, but pushing it came at the expense of his mana. “Accelerating was still fine, the problem was in braking. To avoid making the same mistake, I will need thrusters...” Learning from the previous ‘Meteor incident’, Eru realised the danger of operating the Magi Jet Thrusters for prolonged periods of time. To make up for this flaw, he came up with the method of accelerating efficiently by sprinting and short burst from the thrusters. However, this only works for acceleration, braking would require brute force. And in this vast empty arena, there was nothing he could use to slow himself down. Firing the Magi Jet Thrusters in the opposite direction burns plenty of mana, adding further to the tremendous mana consumption of the Tellestarle. And the results were obvious, Eru’s machine which had depleted its mana moved lethargically. “This is understandable, but the remaining mana is just twenty percent... I can’t use the same attack again.” Eru went too deep and was far away from the main battlefield, it would take some time for him to rejoin the fray. The Magi Jet Thruster started sucking in air again, taking in air in a spiral. That unique noise spurred the tension on the grounds. “I can’t run. If I don’t recover mana by walking, it will be dangerous to rejoin the battle.” The green Knight made loud air sucking noises as it strode towards the battlefield. The Captain of Alvanz— Arnis wielded the sword of his Karrdator Dash. Edgar’s white Tellestarle blocked with its shield and counterattacked during the gap after the block. The sharp thrust was parried by the sword pulled back by Arnis. The two machines pulled away from each other, but Arnis didn’t attack with his back weapon. He knew the bullets will be deflected by Edgar’s machine which was equipped with Flexible Coat. And so, the two machines returned to the basics and fought with sword and shields. But such a fight was spectacular as well, the battle remained intense. The powerful strikes with occasional feints dazzled the audience. Every clash of the sword produces sparks, every bang of the shield shook the ground from its tremours. Arnis and Edgar were evenly matched in skill and courage as the attack of the sword became sharper and the counterattacks equally fierce. As the spectators watched with bated breaths, the battle became even more heated. Dietrich couldn’t spare the time to watch Edgar’s battle. He had two Dashes in front of Guyale— Tuva and Idola blocking his way. Without shields, Guyale specialised in offense and was weak in defense. Taking this point into consideration, Alvanz send two machines to take down Guyale while Arnis was fending off the white Tellestarle. A metal piece flew through the air with a low hum. Guyale used the lightning flail like a part of a chain-sickle, swinging it in circles. Since the mechanism of firing it from the gauntlet had been exposed, it won’t work as a secret weapon anymore. Dietrich changed it into a wide range attack weapon. Seeing the steel piece coming from the side, Tuva backed away to dodge and attack with his back weapon from a distance. Guyale moved towards Idola to dodge, swiping at him with blades. Idola blocked with his shields, but took a blow from Guyale’s back weapon Kamtha. The short Kamtha had terrible in long range, but was powerful in close quarters. Its magic bullet was like a long thin sword, lacking in impact but has a high

accuracy. Guyale raised both its sword as he charged the off balance Idola, but Tuva didn't let him get his way, firing magic bullets to block his path. Guyale gave up its pursuit, throwing his retracted lightning flail out in return. The fast flying metal piece grazed the side of Idola's head, hitting his back weapon. The entire Alvanz team was fighting an unexpectedly tough battle. Aside from Tuva losing half his vision from the sneak attack and Idola needing to look out for the green Knight, the biggest miscalculation was underestimating Guyale's combat prowess. Kamtha, lightning flail and swords, Guyale used a variety of weapons to keep an advantageous distance and attack accordingly. This special style of fighting made it tiring to handle. The unique valve intake noise of the green Knight came from behind them. For some reasons, it didn't approach with high speed, keeping the team Alvanz on their toes, making them distracted. The vicious cycle made the audience think team Alvanz was losing. That's how impressive Eru's machine was. "Ady, we are turning back to attack! Begin turning!" "Understood—! Let's show them the skillful feet of Tzen-chan!" Centaur Knight Tzendorg kicked up a dust on the training arena and galloped, the rhythmic sound it made echoed through the battlefield. After dispersing the Alvanz second fireteam, and renewed its attack. Eru won't be supporting it anymore. They also knew how much mana the Magi Jet Thrusters consumed. The horse part of Tzendorg has movable armour similar to Flexible Coat and its size was twice as big as a standard machine. In order to maintain mobility which was the most important element of cavalry, lightening the weight was crucial. To do so, the weight of the armour on Tzendorg was reduced. The movable armour that took its place efficiently raised the defence which was sacrificed. Such a thing was only possible for Tzendorg who has two pilots. Also, they discovered another important use of the movable armour besides defence, which was to act as a counterweight. Ady pushed hard on the pedal displaying excellent controls, making Tzendorg maintain its speed while turning on the spot. The high speed and heavy weight created heavy centrifugal force, allowing the machine to make a wide turn. Chid tilted the upper torso and all the movable armour plates to pull against this force, successfully pulling off tight control over the center of gravity which looks really scary. Tzendorg displayed an agility that didn't match its cavalry appearance, pouncing towards Alvanz that was still pulling itself together. Tzendorg charged in a straight line as it opened a part of the armour on its waist, revealing a large sub arm that looks like a mechanical jack. Tzendorg placed the halberd in one of its arms onto the sub arm and secured it. This was a device called 'Lance rest', used to help the charge of cavalries. The secured halberd aimed at the second fireteam, and the distance to the enemy became closer in a blink of an eye. Even though it was just one rider, the huge body larger than a Silhouette Knight gave it an imposing aura. It was different from a Duel level Demon Beast, with the determination of the pilot included. Facing such an attack, Zarks and Yunf of the second fireteam raised their lances and waited in their formation. Philia's machine was silent after being attacked by the green Knight at the beginning; maybe the pilot lost consciousness from the fall. They stared at the cavalry closing in and slowly pulled away to avoid implicating Philia who was down. "Yunf, do you think our lances could stop that?" "It would be difficult. Zarks, I have a proposal." After a few short exchanges, they advanced a few steps and threw their lance away. The audience who thought the lances would be an important tool against the cavalry broke into an uproar over this unexpected move. After lightening their gear, they spread out immediately, making their intentions clear from a glance. "Is one side bait? Or are they going for a

pincer attack?” “Something like that, aim for the right side!” Tzendorg adjusted their trajectory and charged Yunf who was shifting to the right. “Yunf... Sorry! I will not let this chance slip by!!” Zarks who wasn’t attacked fired his back weapon fervently with no regards to his remaining mana pool. The barrage of magic bullets howled, blocking Tzendorg’s path, heading towards its defenceless flank— but it didn’t work. Tzendorg cautiously raised the shield on its left arm to block the bullets pelting on it, the bullets that made it past the shield was blocked by the movable armour behind. It didn’t even slow down and continued charging. Leaving normal Silhouette Knights aside, even a Duel level Demon Beast will be fazed by an attack from the side. Zarks felt an emotion closed to fear before the unpredictable capability of his opponent. On the other hand, Yunf wasn’t surprised that he was targeted and execute his next move calmly. He shifted the machine backwards immediately to dodge the lance. The reaction speed and leg power of Karrdator Dash allowed Yunf to dodge a fatal blow with barely an inch to spare. Yunf, who jumped away laterally, didn’t even waste time in getting up and deployed his back weapon. Since Tzendorg needs to turn around for the next attack, now is the best time to counterattack since Tzendorg was showing its back to him. Suddenly, his sensitive ears heard some kind of explosive sound— the vague sound of an air bullet being fired in a confined space, which was followed by the noise of something flying through the air. Yunf who instinctively felt danger stopped his attack and pushed his machine further away— his movement couldn’t be any faster, but it was still too late. He felt a sudden impact hit his machine. After charging past Yunf, Tzendorg shot out something from its back. It was an equipment named Towing Wire. It was originally meant for cargo delivery and had the same structure as Anchor Wire— the capability to accelerate by activating air compression, and the movable anchor shape made from crystal tissue. The Towing Wire flew freely under Ady’s control, snagging the legs of Yunf’s machine. The reeling mechanism behind Tzendorg retracted the cable at full speed, pulling it taut. It was meant for towing heavy cargo and was strong enough to pull Yunf’s machine down, dragging him airborne as if he was sliding into a base while playing baseball. Tzendorg’s terrifying power wasn’t fazed by the weight of one Silhouette Knight, dragging the helpless Yunf’s machine in a cloud of dust. “Oh shit, I can’t stand; it’s too fast, but...” The floored Yunf attempt to fight back. He activated his back weapon and tried to sit up. However, his effort was futile and only the sound of crushed parts came from the machine. When he fell and got dragged along the ground, the impact seemed to cause the back weapon to malfunction. “Is this the... end?” Tzendorg made a sharp turn with Yunf in tow. The change in direction flung him out with centrifugal force. The Towing Wire released its tight hold on the machine’s leg, making Yunf roll further and further away before laying on the ground motionless. “This is no joke...” Zarks who couldn’t do anything as he watched his comrade fall resigned himself and smiled wryly. The opponent was well equipped and not just an ordinary cavalry, not something comparable to a Demon Beast. Against its gigantic body, a melee battle was hopeless. Despite knowing he had no chance of victory, Zarks didn’t back down and braced himself to fight until the end. Adjusting his stance, he raised his shield and sword, ready to fight head on. It wasn’t clear what Tzendorg was planning as it stopped its charge and accepted Zark’s invitation to melee combat— Zarks’ Karrdator Dash finally fell after a hard fought battle some time later. After a full powered clash, Arnis and Edgar pulled away in a hurry. The two machines made intense sounds of pulling in air through the intake valve, the heat from the churning

engine raising the temperature of its armour. Both of them exhaled deeply, not sure how long they had been fighting. It was just a short while, but the concentrated series of events confused their perception of time. Arnis stared at the white machine displayed on his Holo Monitor, complimenting it quietly. What an amazing opponent, his swordsmanship is top class even amongst Alvanz. It has been a long time since Arnis met an opponent he could not defeat after using his full strength. And of course, he wasn't holding back at all in this fight. Arnis wasn't planning to use his full power in the beginning. The White Knight was obviously a defense oriented machine and would take a lot of effort to take down. His plan was to stall him, but he couldn't help getting serious during their exchange. This opponent was 'solid', and that wasn't just talking about the machine. Because it focused on defence, it was forced into a passive role. Being attacked continuously will build up heavy pressure that will overwhelm the pilot, but the white Knight was able to handle it and counterattack whenever he had the chance. Counters that could give Arnis goosebumps. From the performance of the white knight, the strong determination of the pilot was clear. With skills and mental tenacity, how could you not admire such a pilot? Even though he was panting heavily, Arnis couldn't help smiling happily. "A superb knight, such a pity..." "How strong, such a pity..." Edgar adjusted his distance from the Karrdator Dash, knowing his face was getting more serious. He was evenly matched with the Karrdator Dash. Despite their intense exchange, only light damages were inflicted with nothing decisive. Edgar knew very clearly that his machine was installed with Flexible Coat in place of back weapons, and was lacking in offensive power. Even taking that into account, his opponent could still launch fierce attacks, a testament to his impressive skill. The pilot of Dash was good; each strike was heavy and left no gaps for counterattacks. If his Tellestarle didn't specialise in defence, Edgar doubted he could have held on for this long. He didn't have that confidence, and that only deepens his beliefs. "... As expected of the new model, his machine moves much smoother." It was purely a matter of the functionality of the machines. Tellestarle had higher maximum strength output, but the controls are less precise; On the other hand, the Karrdator Dash focuses on controls and sacrificed part of its power. In a battle pushing both machines to its limit, a gap started to surface. The opponent wasn't someone he could overwhelm with brute force. Instead of controlling the machine, Edgar was avoiding the use of too much force, while the opponent didn't have to hold anything back with its smooth movements. Edgar felt frustrated once again over his machine. Another problem puts him at a disadvantage, which was the huge drain of mana by Tellestarle. Flexible Coat which drains mana made the situation even direr. Tellestarle had less than thirty percent of its mana left, and Edgar would definitely be the one to yield. He needed a chance to turn the situation around. The two of them continued to fight. In a corner of Edgar's mind, he planned to propose to Eru to make a machine with tighter controls no matter the outcome. That's the only thing he won't back down on. The red Knight took one step back, then another. Sorrowful sounds came from the crystal tissue operating the machine, which was being drowned out by the battlefield. The arm aimed at the enemy slumped down and it appeared to lose power. "Okay, Guyale's stomach is empty, it can't move anymore." Dietrich said so light heartedly, but his facial expression was anything but that. While Edgar was squaring off against Arnis, he was dueling intensely with the other two machines of Alvanz. If the offensive orientated Guyale didn't attack, it wouldn't be able to fend off its enemy. The high mana consumption rate doomed it to exhaust its mana pool before Edgar does. That

might be so, but that doesn't mean he will succumb so obediently. "How frustrating, it's too soon for me to take on two machines at the same time, I need to train more." Guyale's air intake valve seemed to be crying out that it was at its limits. Despite the Ether Reactor churning at maximum speed, it couldn't keep up with the mana consumption, and there was no telling whether Guyale could attack one last time. Dietrich couldn't see how he could turn this around. In actual fact, the two members of Alvanz was feeling melancholic too. They were fighting two on one and couldn't take down the opponent before he used up his mana. On top of that, the damage to Tuva and Idola were increasing all this while. The offensive capability of the red Knight was impressive, if it was a one on one fight—when they thought about that, their facial expression remained tense. "... I will deal the final blow to this guy, Idola, support the captain." "Understood. He might be at his limit, but still be careful." "I know... I won't forget the damage to my machine that easily." Tuva walked towards Guyale slowly while Idola aimed for the white Tellestarle. "Well, I can't do much, but I won't go down so easily." Dietrich decided how to use his remaining mana— fire his lightning flail and Kamtha to obstruct the Alvanz. Even though going down will put Edgar in a dangerous situation, he still decided to fight for more time. After stalling for time, he could bet on something else— gambling that their Commander will return to the fray. A moment later, everyone started moving. From the way Guyale was ignoring his movement, Tuva knew it was going to make a last ditch struggle; Idola deployed its back weapon, his finger on the trigger; Dietrich was about to move when he notice 'that' thing approaching from behind them— Everything seemed to be happening at the same time, followed by the sound of explosion from behind Alvanz, the sound they most feared and was on guard against, they were too focused on the white and red Knights and lapsed in their guard— lapsed against that opponent that required their total attention. Idola who was tasked with guarding against him was shocked and turned towards the source of the sound on reflex. What appeared before his eyes was a green metallic light that filled the entire holo monitor. Before Idola could react, that thing already reached Idola's machine. That thing was— the metallic green Tellestarle that was attacking with a flying knee attack. Idola's head shattered with the sound of paper being crushed into a ball. In order to protect the important eye crystal of the Silhouette Knight, it was covered with a sturdy helmet. But the leg of the machine which has to support its entire weight could crush it easily, especially with the toughest part of the armour, the knee. Eru who was waiting for his mana to recover closed in as much as he could and performed a devastating flying knee attack. The fierce kick from Eru made Idola, who probably lost for the first time, fly in the air spinning. Everyone was shocked by the powerful attack from Eru. In that instance, time seemed to stop. Arnis used this chance to charge up to Edgar and forced an attack. The strike was as fast as lightning. Edgar who was a step slow had no choice but to block with his sword as the two clashed intensely. Crystal tissue shrieked as the Dash and Tellestarle tried to overwhelm each other as they dug their feet into the ground, showing the power of these giants. The heat emitted by both sides seemed to be increasing the density of the air, blurring the scenery. Gradually, the white Tellestarle presses the Dash down; it has the advantage in maximum power output. The Dash was pushed back, its stance crumbling. But that was the limit. The power of the Tellestarle became weaker. Its powerful legs bent and the noise made by its crystal tissue became softer and weak. Dash kept its sword back. The white Tellestarle knelt to the ground with its sword pointing downwards and became still. Guyale also lost its power. Tuva who

blocked Guyale until the very last moment started its assault. Guyale bet everything it had on a shot from its Kamtha, lightning flail and swords. The Kamtha knocked Tuva's shield loose, but it slid into the lightning flail's range without hesitation and almost knocked Guyale's sword away with a fierce blow. Guyale lost the power to resist, stumbled for a little before falling onto the ground. Ambrosius who was watching this battle silently stood at this moment. "The match is over! Sheath your swords!!" The sound of gongs erupted immediately. It rised above the noise of the crowd and reached the Knights on the battlefield. Both sides who were about to duke it out with their remaining forces kept their weapons a second later, returning the arena to silence. "It was a magnificent display from both sides, splendid! I have seen its strengths and weaknesses!! Wonderful indeed, both parties are worthy of praise!!" The audience gave a warm ovation to the Knights that were still standing in the battlefield. Maybe their brain couldn't keep up with the signal to end, the Knights didn't cheer victoriously, just standing in place as if they had just woke up from a dream. Maybe we are the ones who were saved— after confirming the situation, Arnis mumbled to himself in his heart. Both sides had two machines left in terms of numbers, but it would be reckless to face the green Knight and Tzendorg with the two Dashes they had. Arnis wasn't sure he could pull it off, and in the process of taking down two of the Silver Phoenix Knights, Alvanz lost four of theirs. Their losses were terrible, it was their complete loss. The audience must think so too. To obscure the result this way, there must be political elements at play, but Arnis wasn't interested. Silhouette Knights standing by walked out of the workshop attached to the training arena, keeping the immobile machines one by one. The Karrdator Dash of Alvanz were in a terrible state. Arnis was worried about his comrades inside. At this moment, the white Knight that fell silent before him moved slightly. It probably recovered enough mana after some time. It maintained its position of its sword on the ground and opened its chest armour slowly. Seeing the pilot exit the cockpit, Arnis got out as well. Edgar and Arnis appeared before each other. They saluted each other at the same moment. They didn't know what to say. Or rather, they had expressed everything through their swords in the fight earlier and had no need to exchange words, they just want to see what the other party looked like— that's what he thought, but Arnis still spoke: "My side had the advantage this time. If there is another chance, I hope to spar with you using the same model of machines." Edgar was surprised, but shook his head. "No, I don't intend to use the machine as an excuse. There are other ways to fight and conserve mana, but I couldn't do it because of your skills. It is impossible to stay on the defensive all the time... The reason for this defeat was my immaturity, and the results were clear to see." Arnis laugh as his opponent serious demeanour reminded him of someone from his distant past. "Haha, relax. You will miss things if you only look at the things right in front of you." "... Thank you for your advice, but it is fine. My friends will watch my blind spots for me." That's not what I mean. Arnis responded with an awkward expression and a wry smile in his heart. "Am I responsible for the blind spots?" Dietrich sat cross legged in the downed Guyale, grumbling reluctantly. "Edgar's blind spots? There's too many to watch out for." At this moment, a shadow fell over Dietrich's head with heavy footsteps. He turned and saw the metallic green Tellestarle and Tzendorg. "Sorry I didn't make it in time. It was too reckless I guess." "That's right, but after this fight, I could see my weaknesses clearly." As the performance of Karrdator Dash and Tellestarle was about the same, it emphasised the weakness of Tellestarle. Dietrich crossed his arms and thought for a moment, and decided to share his

views. “Hey Ernesti, ignoring Tzendorg for now, Tellestarle is too crude. It couldn’t be helped since it is a prototype, but I think His Majesty will prefer the Dash...” “I feel the same way too. Hmm— to complete the mass production model, should we take a Dash with us or hand our equipment to the NTR Lab?” Dietrich was worried that Eru might get depressed with the defects of Tellestarle, but felt annoyed by Eru’s nonchalant attitude. “... Aren’t you frustrated?” “Hmmm—? Tellestarle did lose, but that doesn’t matter since Dash is an improved model of Tellestarle. I am just impressed, even if it wasn’t made by me, but good things are simply good things. So that’s that, I will talk to His Majesty and try to get a couple of machines for research.” “... Ahhh, erm, I see. Right, as expected of our Knight Commander. It is about time to revamp Edgar’s machine, right?” Dietrich supported his chin with his palm and elbow on his knees, and was fine with anything. “Well... the mass production model is reaching its final phase. Once it is finished, the Silhouette Knights within the nation would be recalled. That should be a good time to prepare machines for everyone.” A wind filled with dust blew across the arena. Eru squint his eyes, then stood to survey everyone around him. “It is about time for us to withdraw. Di-senpai, can you move?” “Sure. The mana had recovered a little, walking should be fine.” “We can drag you out by grabbing your legs.” “No need. I managed to survive the fight; the machine will get damaged if you drag it.” As they chattered, the Silver Phoenix Knights started to move. Inside the workshop of the arena, Gaizka Johannsson watched the Karrdator Dash being repaired and sighed. When he closed his eyes, he could see the battle earlier before him. The clash between the new models, never seen before equipment and the pilots— all of them were so brilliant that he couldn’t pull his eyes away. He didn’t care about the result of the match; he just wanted to know the working theory behind the techniques used in the battle. The series of events surprised him, but he was happy to see them and was fine with that. Before the meeting today, his heart was filled with unhappiness. As a craftsman, he was proud of being a part of the National Technology Robotics Laboratory, but his passion was gradually grinded away in the never changing days. The development of Silhouette Knights was a project that took generations, the birth of a new model usually take centuries. Their effort will only bear fruit several generations down, and those who do witness that moment was extremely lucky. But what about those who can’t? At the start he became the top technician— the glorious position of workshop chief, when did he started throwing tantrums? It was because there was nothing that was worthy of his protection, when he realised that, he turned into someone who lusted over power. In the end, he couldn’t stand the ‘brat’ leader of the NTR Lab becoming his boss. Until something shocking happened. The appearance of the new model that he thought would only show up every few centuries. The sudden project lit his wish that was residing in the bottom of his heart— finish the new model and use that accomplishment to become the leader of the NTR Lab. Now he thought about it calmly, such thinking was shallow and hollow, proving how narrow his mind was to not understand this back then. But when he remembered the birth of Karrdator Dash, he didn’t think that fervour was a waste. On the stage where he presents the Karrdator Dash— ‘He’ showed up. Leading a Centaur Knight and laden with all sorts of accessories. To be frank, even Karrdator Dash which Gaizka bet everything on was his idea. First was bafflement, then confusion, and finally chaos. ‘His’ word was the thing that broke him out of his confusion. That crazy genius wasn’t bound by common sense, acting as he pleased, focusing wholeheartedly in the development of Silhouette Knights. Gaizka who was chasing the sun realised what he was

searching for was nothing but a mirage. Closing his eyes silently, he stretched his stiff body, staring at his wrinkled hand. He had decades of training under his belt, but his hand had been engraved with the signs of old age. Even if he holds a hammer, he would not be as strong as he used to be. But he has all the experience and knowledge he has accumulated so far, he could reach a higher level if he used them well. The existence of Karrdator Dash bore testament to this. Guiding his subordinate well and pass his skills down. That way, maybe they could reach a higher and distant goal. Gaizka felt thankful for the first time— thankful for being the workshop chief of the NTR Lab. "... Damn kid... It is too early for me to lose to you all..."

Spilling his thoughts unconsciously, he spoke with a tone different from before.

Knights & Magic - Volume 3 - Chapter 23

C.E. 1280, Spring.

The bell situated at the centre of Laihiala Pilot Academy rung out, the clear sound echoing within the campus before it dissipated into the clear blue skies. That wasn't the short bell announcing the beginning and ending of lessons; the long and steady ringing meant that this was a special day. Today, the campus will be holding a graduation ceremony. Students wearing badges signifying their 'graduation' could be seen on campus everywhere. Their ages and faculties were all different. This didn't apply only to Laihiala Pilot Academy, Fremmevira Kingdom on the whole was very liberal in terms of graduation; there were plenty of graduates who didn't complete all their classes. The ceremony did not differentiate between Elementary, Middle or High School, everyone who was leaving the campus received a grand farewell on this day. Among them was a group of Laihiala Middle School graduates. Their treatment was slightly different from the other graduates. According to the custom of this world, those who are fifteen years of age are treated as adults. The third year students of Middle school are fifteen this year, so their graduation had the same significance as a coming of age ceremony. "A lot of things happened, and our circumstances became weird in a lot of ways, but we still graduated successfully." "To think that the school is still willing to issue us graduation certificates after all the willful things we had done." "It felt as though they are asking us to get lost—" "I don't have any recollection of studying seriously midway through my school life." There was a very prominent group among the middle school graduates: A short boy in the middle, a Dwarf youth, flanked by two tall twins made them a quartet with uneven height— Ernesti, Batson, Chid and Ady, the childhood playmates army, or the Silver Phoenix Knight Commander and his merry friends. They will be adults this year. It was understandable why they had complicated feelings as they were about to graduate. Thinking back, they did as they pleased in school to the point of absurdity, they didn't fit the part of being good model students. Attending classes that were far from being related was just the beginning; they even started creating new models suddenly and used the machines on campus without permission. In the end, they even took over an entire faculty, a high school on top of that. Such examples were more than they could count. They were the most infamous problem children since the founding of the school. "Indeed, letting me lead a Knight Order at this age is already a special case, and we started teaching how to use Silhouette Gear mid-way..." They might be problem children, but the results they produced were impeccable. The biggest accomplishment was probably the invention of the industrial work machine Silhouette Gears, and pushing its implementation. The influence of Silhouette Gears was wide and involved many industries. Thanks to this, there was a revolution in the education content not just in Laihiala Pilot Academy, but kingdom wide. And so, the 'inventors' from the Silver Phoenix Knights received plenty of invitations to be instructors from all

over the nation, making the group wonder whether they were students or teachers. Due to their special circumstances, graduation became the compromising way of dealing with this troublesome group they couldn't handle. The graduation ceremony proceeded without incident, which was followed by the current students sending the graduates out of the school gates to end the ceremony. From tomorrow onwards, the graduates will go on their separate ways and move on with their lives. Some of them looked back on their lives at school, others felt uneasy about the future. They brought their own emotions and walked towards the main gate. At this time, heavy footsteps came from somewhere. Without needing to search for the source of the noise, the group of Silhouette Knights appeared a short distance away. The procedure that was not part of the ceremony confused all those who were present. In the face of the crowd, the Silhouette Knight Squad spread out, lining on both sides of the road leading to the main gate. The Knights straightened their backs and formed up beautifully, facing each other with smooth movements. Immediately after that, all the Knights drew the swords on their waist. With the sword in their right hand and sheath in their left, they raised their swords high and crossed it with the Knight on the opposite side, before withdrawing it before their face. All the machines stopped with the position of praying with their swords, creating a path with the swords of the Silhouette Knights. A Silhouette Knight nearby spoke to the graduates who were at a loss:

“Congratulations on your graduation, my juniors. We will be leaving this place in the near future too, but allow us to send you off with a grand farewell.” The scene before them was as majestic as a gallery of statues. The procedure that didn't exist in the past years made the graduates blush in joy, and they went through the path made by the giant Knights. This year's graduation ceremony would surely leave a deep impression in the hearts of many people. And of course, the pilots of these Silhouette Knights were the members of the Silver Phoenix Knights. Their special course of action was because of the person walking slowly at the end of the line of graduates— The Knight Commander with a face full of smiles, humming cheerfully as he walked slowly ahead. Ady had a similar expression, holding Eru's hand as she walked beside him. Chid and Batson who were not far behind puffed their chest high as they grinned. Thus ends their six turbulent years of campus life. After passing through the campus main gate, Eru turned his head. The vast campus ground of the Pilot Academy spread before his eyes. He said loudly with complicated feelings: “Laihiala Pilot Academy, I have been in your care all these while! Well then... Silver Phoenix Knights, move out!” The members moved quickly after receiving their Commander's order. The Silhouette Knights began moving at the same time, and were followed by carriages. The rest of the members were seated inside, along with all sorts of tools. These luggages were all the Silver Phoenix Knights had, and would follow them to their new base. With the graduation of their Knight Commander, the Silver Phoenix Knights officially moved away from Laihiala Pilot Academy and began operation as an independent entity. They will use the newly constructed ‘Olvecius fort’ near Laihiala Academy City as their base, and work actively around the nation. This day, they started their journey in both ways. These were the peaks that separated the western nations from Fremmevira Kingdom, the Aubigne Mountain Range. The two sides of the continents were linked by the road known as the ‘East West Highway’, built along the mountains that were easier to traverse. The highway was built perfectly, but due to the treacherous terrain, it took a lot of effort to travel on it. A convoy of carriages was moving along the East West Highway. The convoy was escorted by a sizeable number of Silhouette Knights. They

were not merchants and hadn't brought much cargo with them. They only brought items necessary for travel. In the middle of the pack was a carriage larger than the others. It had a simple design, but was built sturdily, making the high status of the passenger obvious. The convoy advanced cautiously ahead, but when they passed over the tallest peak, a rough voice bellowed out from the large carriage to stop the drivers. "Hey, stop the carriage!!" The flag to signal the stopping of the convoy was waved and the carriages stopped one after another. The escorting Silhouette Knights assumed their defensive positions to protect the entire convoy. It was an impulsive action, but the movement of all the personnel was perfect, making it clear that such an action had probably happened several times before. The carriage shook as the passenger alighted. He was wearing a well tailored suit that did not sting on the usage of high quality clothes. Regrettably, the man was too well built. He was almost two metres in height with a solid body, the embodiment of wildness and ruggedness. The tidy and refreshing clothes didn't match the man's powerful aura. Bystanders might even think that the atmosphere was weird. But the man himself wasn't concerned with this at all. He took a deep breath, and exhaled slowly as if he was tasting the air in his lungs carefully. His solid muscles expanded with his lungs, the clean white shirt made sounds as it was stretched tight. Sad to say, the clothes tailored for him was as fragile as a candle in the wind in the face of his powerful muscles. "The air here is great! The air in the great Aubigne Mountains are so refreshing. Staying in that tiny castle was so constraining." The mountain breeze blew his unkempt hair. His blonde hair with a touch of red fluttered like the mane of a lion. "Yes, Your Highness. This fellow is also saying its condition is better than usual." The Silhouette Knight escort behind him imitated his actions and took a deep breath, and the revving of the Ether Reactor became louder. "Haha, I told you so! Ohhh! Look, the home I missed so much!" The entire mountain was covered in greenery with the colours of the city standing out in between. The capital Känkänen and the royal castle— Shreiber was right there. Further into the distance, the small image of Laihiala Academy City could be seen. "Oh, beautiful Fremmevira. Well then, Your Highness, since it is right before us, let us make haste into Känkänen." "Don't be so petty, I have been holed up in that small boring place all this time! If I don't stretch my body here, I won't be able to do so when I go inside the city." He was just starting to stretch his limbs when his chest button flew out with a pop. It sounded just like the scream of the royal tailor that made his shirt. "Ara, this expensive shirt is so fragile. It is a gift from someone, but I still don't understand the fashion of Gajdos."

After uttering his complains, the second son of Fremmevira Kingdom's first prince, Riothamus, 'Emrys Geijer Fremmevira' got onto the carriage once again.

Knights & Magic - Volume 3 - Chapter 24

She was deep in slumber. It could be called sleeping, meditation, or deep thinking. This was her race's way of becoming one with the Great Stream.

She journeyed in her slumber. Her body seemed to be extending endlessly across the vast lands, spreading her body out wide. Unlike blood circulation, the stream flowing across the lands whispers to her. She, her kinsmen and ancestors become one and kept on extending out further.

The infinitely overlapping consciousness was attracted by something. A foreign object, disturbing her sleep, a part of her that had been detached from the Great Stream felt out of place. Her intuition told her that this thing could not be allowed to exist.

She woke the next second. Despite having experienced the longest amount of time among her kinsmen, she still required a long time to become one with the Great Stream. Awakening from her slumber was not what she had planned, but there was no hesitation. She has to dispose of that foreign object disrupting her slumber.

“What is the matter Elder? It isn't time for you to wake yet.”

She only moved her eyes and saw her young kinsmen. She had white skin, soft blond hair and a slender body. The most prominent feature was her knife like ears. This was a common feature among her kinsmen.

“...Something is obstructing the ‘journey’.”

She locked eyes with the other party but her body didn't move as she spoke. Her body couldn't move, and didn't need to move. This body of hers would be summoned by her ancestors one day and didn't mean anything to her.

“The squirming evil intentions are descending upon the forest, it has to be removed.”

“... I understand. We will meet them in battle with our riders.”

The kinsmen did not inquire further and went away.

She did not sleep. If the foreign objects were not disposed of, there was no real meaning to her slumber. She has no reason to sleep once again.

She waited, waited for the moment her prophecy became true. No matter how much time passed, it was just a blink of the eye to her.

This was the prologue to the crisis that loomed over the forest and 'home'.

◆◆◆

That place bore traces similar to the trampling of a battle field.

Tattered pieces that were humanoid in appearance were dumped everywhere. A wrinkled palm reached towards the sky, the eyes within the helmet were already devoid of life. The rusty armour had lost its shine, its brownish red colour blending it with the plains.

These wreckage were originally Silhouette Knights. Some were old, but many of them

were new. Piles of wreckage faithfully displayed the past, present and future of this place.

This was the 1st R&D workshop within the fort Dufare, home to the headquarters of National Technology Robotics Laboratory.

“... Ugh, we have to tidy this place up.”

Workshop chief Gaizka sighed as he watched the vast amount of space taken up by the wreckage— These were the results of repeated experiments. The major project of developing the new model and revolution in technology led to a series of failures, creating mountains of scrapped parts. The accumulated wreckage was double the norm and an eye sore. Gaizka made up his mind to clear away these junk when production of the new models begins nationwide.

As Gaizka walked out of the dark workshop as he was pondering about this mess. The moment he moved outside, the bright sunlight blinded him. As his eyes adjusted to the light, his smile deepens.

There were rows of giants kneeling down with their chest armour open, exposing the cockpit inside.

They were not Karrdator or Karrdator Dash. These were the crystallization of the efforts made by the craftsmen of NTR Lab all this while. The newest mass production model, Karrdetolle.

Using the latest Karrdator Dash as its base, it was upgraded with the Option Works proposed by the Silver Phoenix Knights. The biggest difference was the optimization of the Capacity Frame— these improved the capacity armour’s mana pool storage by leaps and bounds. With that, the problem inherent in Tellestarle— insufficient mana supply had been resolved. Karrdetolle was the perfected cutting edge technology of the new models.

The machines only had a simple layer of protective paint, keeping its original metallic property, plain and low profile like the Silhouette Knights manufactured by Fremmevira Kingdom. In contrast, the outer skeleton that focused on defensive capability and ease in manufacturing had a clean aesthetic,

Karrdetolle had completed its operation test and was ready to be mass produced. The nobles inside the kingdom had also received notice and had begun hiring craftsmen and conducting training courses. Hence forth, the Silhouette Knights within the nation would be replaced by these new models. NTR Lab's most pressing task had ended for now.

Gaizka stretched his neck and shoulders that were stiff from fatigue, and sighed as he thought of his old bones that weren't working as well as he wanted. He and the 1st R&D workshop charges under him had been researching fervently, pushing himself recklessly for a long period of time. It was about time for a vacation. Gaizka thought up the schedule to take leave as he walked towards the director's office.

◆◆◆

The king Ambrosius and his family, the royalties of Fremmevira kingdom, basically lived inside the royal castle Shreiber. From the end of the audience hall, after passing complicated passage and several rooms, one could reach their private chambers.

The inner part of castle Shreiber was known as the 'Inner City'. The deeper it was, the higher the altitude, with the tallest tower situated in the center of the castle. This place was modified from Fortress Shreiber and that tower was built after the renovation. Hence, the first priority during the construction of Shreiber was toughness, but it was still too shabby as the residence of royalties.

Due to its history, this zone had few windows. With the lack of natural light, there was no choice but to burn expensive animal oil regardless of night or day. The fine furniture that did not seem too elegant gave off a sturdy atmosphere under the gentle light.

"I have sent a messenger to Kuscheperca for Martina, asking Emrys to return."

There were two men in the room. One was King Ambrosius, the other was younger than Ambrosius, slender in build and bearing a striking resemblance to the King.

“Eh, I have not seen him for a long while too. When did he set off for Kuscheperca?”

“About three years ago.”

“... I see, that was before I met with ‘that’. It hasn’t been long since, but it feels like ages ago.”

Ambrosius lowered his gaze and focused on the wine cup in his hand, the liquid shaking within it.

“... But your majesty, I think it is still too early.”

“Don’t address me as your Majesty, Rio, there are no outsiders here.”

“I understand... Father.”

The eldest son of Ambrosius, first in the line of succession to the throne ‘Riothamus Haarus Fremmevira’ exhaled, relaxing the corner of his eyes that were tensed up.

“Eh, I feel that the timing is just right. NTR Lab had sent in the report of the new model they developed with the Silver Phoenix Knights. After Emrys returns, the news will probably have spread across the nation. Everyone will be able to see that the moment to embark onto a new era is upon us.”

Riothamus wanted to refute, but closed his mouth immediately. This was because of Ambrosius expression that seemed to be harbouring some schemes and the way he was enjoying himself. Experience told him that whenever his father made such a face, no one would be able to stop him. On top of that, what Ambrosius said had a point. In the face of revolutionary change, there was a need to settle things.

“There is one task left. No, it is more like a promise.”

“Silver Phoenix Knights... it’s regarding that boy correct? Will it be fine? Sending him there, even if there is no problem with the ‘law’, those people are still hard to please.”

Even though they bore a resemblance, the air about the two of them were very different. Ambrosius son did not take after Ambrosius’ most prominent strong willed personality.

“Fufu, really, you worry too much.”

“It is an important matter after all. Father, you are taking it too lightly.”

It wasn’t clear what he thought was interesting, Ambrosius had to stifle his urge to laugh out loud as Riothamus tried to restrain his sigh.

“Be more relaxed about things, Rio. If you keep mulling over things, you will suffer a lot in the future.”

“Father, you are acting too recklessly!”

In the depths of the Royal Castle, father and son who seemed to get along and not get

along at the same time conversed for quite a while in private.

Several days later, a man with a huge build appeared on the corridor of Castle Shreiber.

“My country feels the best! My restrained life just yesterday was just like a dream!”

That man was ‘Emrys Geijer Fremmevira’, 4th in line in the order of succession to the throne. He stretched his body widely, using his body language to express his sense of liberation before walking forth with cheerful strides.

What he was wearing right now was tough demon beast leather that was hard to work on, equipment of the highest grade— ‘Black beast armour’. A fine cape rested on his shoulders and a sword that focused on practicality hung from his waist. This armour was tailored especially for his huge built. It was expensive, but as a member of the royal family, it was still too crude. It suited him because of the impression he gave others.

Anyway, he seemed to be in a great mood.

He was studying abroad not too long ago and forced to wear fashionable clothes that restricted his movement. Those top class materials didn’t suit his bulky body and wasn’t to his liking at all. As a royalty, he preferred styles that were ‘tough and practical’ or ‘easy to move in’, which was a pity. This armour specially made for him showed to the largest degree his preference for ease of movement, toughness and durability.

Wearing an attire he was familiar with, he walked in the royal castle with high spirits, opening a door with a bright smile. Inside the room— the audience hall was the members of the royal family with Ambrosius at the head, and the nobles such as Duke Dixgard. He opened his mouth in a smile, looking at everyone that was gathered.

“Yo, Dad! Grandpa! Long time no see, I am puaahh!”

Before he could finish, Ambrosius threw his royal seal at his head, which almost knocked Emrys out.

In front of Emrys who was nursing his head while yelling, Ambrosius hugged his head in resignation.

“This stupid grandson... He still does not know proper manners, what did he learn in his studies abroad!?”

“My sincere apologies Your Majesty, I had been reminding him...”

Riothamus was really embarrassed. His eldest son Uther was mature and acted in a manner befitting of a royalty, but that was not so for his second son. It's not clear who he takes after, rather than easy going, he was closer to being brash in nature. In a final bid to change his behaviour, Emrys was sent to study abroad.

“Martina is not one to skimp on education... Even she couldn't rein him in?”

Ambrosius mumbled, thinking about his daughter that married to the Kuschelperca Kingdom. Martina was Riothamus's sister, and Emrys' aunt. She married into the Kuschelperca Kingdom, which bound the two Kingdoms on friendly terms.

Riothamus was sent to his aunt after becoming an adult at 15, but that scene earlier showed clearly the ineffectiveness of his overseas stint.

“Eh, I don't know who your personality resembles.”

“He resembles your Majesty.”

Ambrosius wasn't expecting anyone to interrupt, and saw the usual expressionless Knut before him.

"He resembles your Majesty."

Ambrosius averted his eyes, pretending not to hear anything.

Shortly later, Emrys got up nonchalantly.

"Emrys, did you behave like this in Kuscheperca too?"

"Ah— No, not to that extent. I err... I am also aware of watching the time and place. I was just too excited when I saw everyone after such a long time..."

Seeing how badly Emrys was stuttering, the suspicious gazes from everyone focused on him, but the man himself wasn't fazed and puffed out his chest. It seldom happens, but Ambrosius waved the white flag this time.

"... I will ask you the details later. Alright, the reason I gathered everyone today..."

Ambrosius cleared his throat, sweeping away the relaxed atmosphere due to the appearance of a problem child.

"It has been 36 years since I ascended the throne. It is about time for me to step down, the next regent will be my son here— Riothamus."

Everyone listened attentively. This wasn't an abrupt speech by Ambrosius, and the people

gathered thought that this might happen.

The position of monarch of Fremmevira Kingdom was hereditary, usually passed down to the eldest son. The eldest son is first in the line of succession, the other siblings were next in the line of succession regardless of gender. However, in the event that the reigning king has grandchildren, the children of the eldest son will be next in the line of succession instead.

The most common reason of abdication was the wish for a strong leader during the chaotic formative years of the Kingdom; according to tradition, the King will abdicate when he reached an advanced age. Ambrosius was sixty years old, a very elderly man in this world. It was no surprise for him to raise the topic of abdication.

However, everyone knew Ambrosius was still in great shape. Even though their mind could accept it, they still feel anxious about it. It was a testament of how much he was beloved by his people.

Riothamus came forth, breaking the silence. He stood straight up, and bowed before the man who was his father, as well as the king for the last time. After Riothamus ascends the throne, he can't lower his head, even if it was to his own father. At this moment, he completed his bow with his utmost respect.

"I bow before you, your Majesty.... No, my father."

"Hmm, be always cautious after taking the throne, and strive for the best. Alright, we will deal with the official ceremony later, I hope everyone can support this country together with my son, I beseech to all of you."

Ambrosius surveyed all those present, and the nobles all kneeled and bow in response.

C.E. 1280, summer.

News of 'The Lion King' Ambrosius abdicating and the ascension of Riothamus to the throne had spread throughout the kingdom. The people praised the accomplishment of the old king, and held high expectations of their next regent. Shortly after, the newest mass produced Silhouette Knight models were also pushed into service nationwide.

A new monarch and knights— Fremmevira kingdom was entering a period of major changes since its founding. Everyone looked forward to the peaceful and prosperous development of the kingdom.

A month after the coronation of the new king. At this point of time, the activities celebrating the coronation had ended, and the kingdom returned to its normal peaceful days.

By traveling a short distance to the east from Laihiala Academy city on the 'Fremmevira highway', a fortress was situated in a normal forest. This was where the Olvecius fortress was located.

Normally speaking, this place had no strategic value as a base, but it was a very important fortress for the kingdom.

The reason didn't lie with the location, but the Knight Order stationed there— Silver Phoenix Knights.

The frightening thing was that it wasn't a stretch to say this fortress existed for the sake of Knight Commander Eru. Such a weird location was chosen because of its distance from Eru's hometown after all.

As for the situation inside Olvecius fortress, it was filled with several of the new mass produced Karrdetolle parked casually around the place. Except for the direct manufacturer — NTR Lab, no other Knight Orders has this many Karrdetolle. NTR Lab gave priority to the Silver Phoenix Knights not only because they were involved in the development process, but also as an investment in Eru.

A dwarf youth was running through the hangar filled with the forest of Karrdetolle. He

was looking around, searching for something. When he discovered the short youth buried in papers, he yelled:

“Oh, found you, silver boy. Aldele’s tuning is almost done. Also, Guyalinda. Say something to that dumbass Di, he had broken it so many times already!”

Eru who was sketching designs nonstop responded to the voice of the chief craftsman—Boss, lifted his head and said:

“No, Di sempai just can’t handle the Magic thrust jet well yet, I heard him falling hard just now... But he seems to be getting better, can you forgive him?”

“It’s all because of your weird idea. Come on, just one dumbass flying with the Magic thrust jet is already a handful.”

The boss scratched his head with a sigh, and turned around. Eru followed his gaze to the side. Before them were two Silhouette Knights that differed in colour and shape from the mass produced models.

“I admit that he is working hard. But it won’t be nice if words of the squad captain’s machine falling all over the place got out.”

Squad captain machines— On one side was the white knight Aldelecumber, the personal machine of 1st squad captain Edgar C Blanche. With the newest Karrdetolle as its base, its appearance had been modified to be similar to Earlecumber. Minor adjustments had been made to accommodate the pilot, but the contents were mostly the same. Karrdetolle already had powerful performance and smooth controls, which fulfilled the needs of Edgar just fine.

On the other side was the personal machine of 2nd squad captain Dietrich Cunitz— the red knight Guyalinda. This machine also used Karrdetolle as its base, and had been

modified under the request of the pilot so much so that it was unrecognizable.

Shields and Flexible coat weren't even built in, a completely offense orientated load out. Magic thrust jet was installed despite the fact that it would limit the machine's performance. It was considered a fashionable machine, with some flaws and difficult controls, but that part was just how Dietrich likes it.

The squad leaders who had contrasting personalities projected their style onto their squad. The result is the 1st squad focused on defence while the 2nd squad specialize on offence. The core of the Silver Phoenix Knights comprises of these two squads with strong characters.

“Oh, one more thing. The guys in ‘the third’ are wailing again.”

“I thought I already assigned Chid and Ady to them?”

After the Silver Phoenix Knights shifted to Olvecius fort and achieved independence as a Knight Order, their biggest change was the addition of the 3rd squad.

The characteristics of the 3rd squad were totally different from the other two squads. The reason lies in the Silhouette Knights they used. With a body larger than normal Silhouette Knights, an alien that combines man and horse— what they piloted was the pride of the Silver Phoenix Knights, the centaur knight Tzendrinble.

Using prototype number one Tzendorg as the mold, Tzendrinble changed the control system to single pilot mode, a mass produced model after all sorts of adjustments. It was still an expensive machine powered by two Ether Reactors, and the number produced were limited, not as widespread as Karrdetolle. Most of the machines in service were used by the Silver Phoenix Knights.

“Well, see for yourself.”

The Boss pointed to the side of Tzendorg's large foot. Knights from the 3rd squad were gathered there, discussing about something.

"Like I said, I know what you mean by using the flexible coat while moving, but can you be more specific about the method?"

"Eh, the machine will tilt when you turn right? At that moment, you exert force with a 'bang!', like this, then pull back with a 'cock!'"

"Ady-chan, I already said— a thousand times, this is totally— not an explanation! Stop using sounds like 'bang' and 'cock' to explain!"

"Woo, help me Eru—!!"

Aside from its expensive cost and weird appearance, another reason why Tzendrinble wasn't popular was that its shape differed too much from the basic models, making control difficult. Leaving the Tzendorg with its double pilot system aside, the improved Tzendrinble was still being worked on right now to simplify the control system. Special Magius engines were used, and the design was being adjusted to be more similar to riding a horse. Some of the movements were automated by using earlier control scripts, implementing an advanced concept seamlessly in. However, the results were shown clearly. The third squad spent the most time training, but they still lack proficiency.

"... Go help her, especially the 3rd squad captain."

As the twins who were filling as trainer were bad in coaching, it made matters worse. The problem lies in them explaining by only sharing their experience, unlike Eru who taught through theory.

"This is training for the two 'Commander's aide'— passing the things I taught accurately to others."

"Like I told you, the one who will suffer are not those two."

Helvi who was appointed as the captain of the 3rd squad had a hard time interpreting the explanations of the twins. It would be simpler if she could have sought out the answer herself, but despite her abundant piloting experience, the Centaur Knight was not something she could tame in such a short time.

“Hmm— Alright, I will think of something when I finish the design I am working on...”
Seeing Eru engrossed in his plans with no intention to leave, the Boss let out a deep sigh.

After seeing the Boss going back to his maintenance work, Eru held a bundle of designs and headed towards the depths of the fortress. Passing through the cluster of Silhouette Knights, he reached a maintenance platform at the end of the workshop with a machine sitting on it. Even for the Silver Phoenix Knights who were used to abnormality, the machine sitting on the chair like maintenance platform was a very strange existence.

It had a normal humanoid appearance. As it was being modified, its outer skeleton had been torn off. People who had a basic understanding of Silhouette Knights would be able to tell that something was wrong immediately. The weird swell on its back and the metal pipes hanging from its exposed body made it look larger than a standard Silhouette Knight. Most of the metal pipes were linked to its back, accentuating the weirdness of its upper body.

The machine had almost no external equipment, only the two shoulders and waist were armoured. Those were not normal armour, but special equipment installed with block crystal tissue and engraftment— Magi Jet Thrusters.

“This had gone through a lot of modification... it is almost at its limit.”

No one would be able to tell that this entity that seemed to be filled with ‘metallic organs’ was originally a normal Karrdator.

It all began in the magic thrust jet experiment conducted a few years ago. This Karrdator which was chosen as the test subject was seriously damaged after the experiment failed. After repairs, it was put through grueling experiments as the test subject of the Magi Jet Thrusters. At one point of time, its operation was failing and it was overhauled into a

Tellestarle. By the way, this machine was used by Eru during the fight at the Centaur Knight's presentation.

Everybody came to a consensus over time and saw this machine as Eru's personal item. It took on the role of being installed with the things Eru came up with to test them out. When the member saw him installing strange parts one after another onto it, they dubbed the machine 'Eru's Toybox'.

Even though Toybox was no stranger to modification, it still had a limit.

"There is a clash in the parts that we installed, resulting in additional burden on the machine, that's why we underestimated the mana consumption... We did add in another ether reactor, but we can't see the improvement."

The swell in the back of Toybox was made to accommodate an additional ether reactor.

Magi Jet Thrusters consumed a lot of mana. When using such equipment, increasing the mana supply became one of the issues they will need to face. They already had the expertise in using multiple ether reactors when they built Tzendorg, and they thought it would be fine to use this method, but the results were discouraging. This method worked in Tzendorg because it has large and had ample space to work with. A standard sized machine was too cramped to fit in two ether reactors.

The toybox could be activated with the external equipment, but the mana supply was too unstable, and couldn't produce the level of mana they expected. The design was unbalanced and hard to control. Leaving the mana consumption issue aside, it was even worse than a Tellestarle.

"Designing it from scratch would be better indeed."

Eru placed several design plans on the floor, and compared it to the actual thing before him. It was obvious that using the current designs won't be sufficient. With multiple power supplies and activating the magi jet thrusters without compromising power supply — To achieve this goal, he needed to consolidate all the technology and knowledge to complete a brand new design.

“Yes, this... will be my personal machine.”

Eru opened his eyes wide because of what he murmured. What flashed across his mind was an existence he lost once. A relic from a far away world he won't be able to get no matter how much he craved for it.

“... If that is the case, making something that ‘couldn't be assembled’ will be fine too...”

“Eru, E— ru!”

The distracted Eru heard the energetic cry. Pulling himself together, he turned his head and saw Ady jogging over.

“Ady... Did you skip out on work and run here?”

“Eh. No, no I didn't! I am working properly... Ah! I am here to tell you that there is a guest.”

Ady's eyes were unfocused, but Eru didn't press her any further and headed towards the conference room. Most of Fort Olvecius was taken up by Silhouette Knight facilities, only a bare minimum of facilities were reserved for other uses. Something luxurious like an audience room to receive guests didn't exist from the very beginning, and the conference room was used instead.

When Eru entered the conference room, he saw a trooper waiting for him. He had a message with him, and after exchanging the standard greeting with Eru, he said:

“Knight Commander Echevarria sir, the royal capital has issued a summoning order for you.”

The royal capital Känkänen was bustling with people. The loud sound of a bell rang in the crowded main street. It came from a cavalry with a bell advancing through the street. When they heard this noise, the crowd scattered to the side of the roads. This was a messenger troop announcing the imminent arrival of a Silhouette Knight into the royal capital.

To accommodate the ten metres tall giant weapon, a spacious path was needed— such as this main street. This road was also open for the citizens to use, so it was a standard procedure for someone to announce the arrival of Silhouette Knights into the castle. Using the main street also served the purpose of displaying the might of the Silhouette Knights to the people.

Shortly after the horseman messenger went by, the half man half horse Silhouette Knight Tzendorg appeared. The royal capital citizens who were scared witless in the beginning had gotten used to it completely. The equipment had been taken off since it was entering the royal capital, but the gigantic body larger than the standard Silhouette Knight still left a deep impression on the citizens.

Tzendorg moved through the main street majestically and reached castle Schriber. It was ushered to the newly erected hangar to park Centaur Knights shortly after. The moment the machine went into standby mode, the pilot inside showed up. They were Eru and Ady.

“We reached the castle—!”

“Yes, thank you Ady. I can operate a Tzendrinble, so you didn’t need to come along.”

“No, this Tzen-chan is mine, I will only lend it out, even if it is you, Eru!”

“That’s what you say, but you just want to skip the training of the 3rd squad right?”

“No, no such thing... Right?”

Eru smiled wryly at Ady who won't meet his eyes.

“This will be the only exception, please work hard tomorrow.”

After hearing that, Ady pounced over happily. Eru walked into the castle while dragging her.

“Knight Commander of the Silver Phoenix Knights is here with haste after receiving the summon.”

“Commander Aide Ady Olter reporting.”

The two of them came to a place other than the audience hall after entering the castle. This was because the one who summoned for them was not the reigning king, but the retired regent Ambrosius.

“Yes, well met, Ernesti, Adeltrud, please relax.”

A shadow loomed over them after they sat down. Looking up, they saw a tall man standing straight with his arms folded. His well built muscles and burly build was intimidating, while his messy hair gave the impression of a lion.

Eru felt that this man had some resemblance to Ambrosius who was seated behind.

“... So you are the Silver Phoenix Knight Commander, Ernesti Echevarria. I heard about you, but you are really small!”

“You are right, your highness Emrys.”

The 2nd prince of Fremmevira Kingdom, Emrys Geijer Fremmevira smiled cheerfully with his tanned face when he spoke. For the petite Eru, meeting Emrys in the eye wasn't just a simple task of lifting his head, and needed to bend his upper body backwards. Ambrosius who couldn't stand for this said with a wry smile:

“Emrys, you sit over there, it's hard to talk like this.”

The retired king had three children, two sons and a daughter. When his eldest son Riothamus took the throne, his sons, Ambrosius's grandsons, became the next in the line of succession. This meant that Riothamus' second son was 2nd in line to the throne. Despite his high status, he only returned to the kingdom about a month ago.

“I heard that your highness was still studying abroad at Kuscheperca, welcome back.”

“My dad is ascending the throne, so I had to return.”

Eru also heard the news of Emrys return. Because of the various things that required their attention during the coronation, they didn't have a chance to meet. This was their first official meeting.

“To think a new Silhouette Knight was made during the short period while I was away! And that new model, Karrdetolle!? Awesome? I tried it out, it is smooth and powerful, as expected of our nation's knight!”

“Yes, of course! That is the work of my Silver Phoenix Knights!”

“I thought so, great job!”

Emrys agreed with the happy Eru, then suddenly slapped his own knee.

“Speaking of which, there is that horse thing! Looks interesting. Lend it to me next time, I want to take it for a spin.”

“Ehhh? Erm— sigh— Tzen-chan is hard to operate, or rather, it is a bit difficult to loan it out, well...”

“If I get on it, there will be a way to make it move, it’s just something like a horse, just having the spirit will be enough!”

“Hmmm...”

“It is different from horses and can’t be driven by spirit alone.”

For some reason, Ambrosius was also participating in the conversation enthusiastically. His eyes weren’t those of a gentle supporter, it was closer to observing how Eru handles the intimidating Emrys. The evidence was that Ambrosius relaxed his expression happily and looked amused. Eru glanced sideways at Ambrosius as he casually handled Emrys. Meanwhile, Ady was worried about Tzendorg being taken away. Emrys maintained his energetic attitude and became excited.

“Let’s discuss that later, I heard that I was summoned because of something urgent.”

Eru felt it was about time and ended the conversation. If he allowed Emrys to go on, it will probably take all day.

“Oh, right, I asked for you to come here to make a Silhouette Knight for me.”

Ambrosius cut to the chase, which made Eru asked baffled:

“Your Excellency, don’t you already have the outstanding machine ‘Raids of Valor’?”

“That’s different, it’s the king’s machine. I passed it on to Riothamus when I abdicated, and can’t take it out as I please. I want a new one, and it seems like a good idea to commission it to you.”

“Retirement life is boring”— Ambrosius muttered softly. Eru almost asked him how he planned to make retirement life more exciting, but he managed to restrain himself.

“I understand, in that case, allow me to do what I can.”

“Can you make one for me too! Just making it for grandpa is unfair.”

“Hmmm, how about it, Ernesti? Can you prepare two machines?”

“By your orders, just one or two machines isn’t a problem. Well, what kind of machine would you like? I will try my best to satisfy both of your needs.”

Ambrosius wanted to speak when he heard that, but Emrys was faster. He stood strongly and kicked the chair away.

“Okay, the most important thing is ‘power’.”

He announced loudly. Eru took out a small notebook, pen and ink from the pouch on his waist. This set of stationery was prepared by him for ease of taking notes. As he wrote, Emrys listed out the requirements.

“The next important thing is ‘power’.”

Eru nodded with a serious face and continued making notes.

“The final important thing, is also power.”

Eru only wrote the words ‘Muscle Head’ on his paper, and asked after toying with his notes:

“Okay, I understand what you mean. Ah, what about the design appearance?”

“Erm... Something very powerful... Well, something like grandpa’s ‘lion’, something amazing!!”

Eru outlined the words with a doodle design, then circled it again, making it look strong and powerful.

“I will leave the details to you, just don’t go overboard, the rest is up to you.”

“By your orders, I will prepare machines suitable for your Excellency and your highness.”

The requirements were too amazing, even Ady who was listening by the side almost said: “What kind of requests are these?” Despite that, Eru was still smiling happily.

About a month after this conversation happened, a Tzendrinble pulling a wagon came to the royal capital. On the wagon were two giant figures covered by cloth, the personal machines prepared for Ambrosius and Emrys.

When he heard the news of their arrival, Emrys rushed there at full speed, even Ambrosius couldn't help following with curiosity. They were not the only audience, the guards in Shreiber castle also came to watch, looking at the cargo with curious eyes.

When the cloth on the wagon was taken off before watchful eyes, two Silhouette Knights were revealed, reflecting light brilliantly under the sun.

“This is really... Ernesti, you are being playful again.”

Ambrosius suppressed his laughter. Just as he said, the designs of the two Silhouette Knights were very exaggerated.

— One of them looked like a lion. The chest armour and torso formed the face of a lion, with the armour styled like its mane with twists and bends. It was golden in colour and very prominent.

— The other had the appearance of a tiger. The torso mimics the face of a tiger, although the other parts were rather plain, but the silver body with black stripes around it made it just as prominent as the golden machine.

Eru ignored the crowd that was stunned by the striking appearance of the Silhouette Knights, opening his hands in an exaggerated manner happily as he explained:



“What do you think, your Excellency and your highness Emrys. They are the ‘Gordesleo’ and ‘Silver Tiger’. As requested by your highness, both of them possess immense power, excellent performance and great defensive capability.”

Emrys had been standing as still as a statue with his mouth open all this while. Ambrosius stroked his beard slowly and asked:

“Oh, power is what my dumb grandson wanted, but what about defence? Why did you focus on that?”

“That was my idea... Your safety is the most important thing above all.”

“I see, that’s true. The Royal knights have enhanced defence capabilities too, something that a general will worry about.”

Ambrosius nodded with satisfaction. After some time, Emrys finally came to his senses. He raised his muscular arms and roared at the two beast machines:

“Woah, totally awesome!! Hahaha, well done, Silver Commander! I like this!”

Emrys who was as ecstatic as a child pointed at one of the machines with a smile. At the same time, Ambrosius who was comparing the two knights pointed to one of them too.

“Grandpa, I want the Gordesleo.”

“Well then Emrys, I will take this Gordesleo...”

Both of them stopped at the same time and looked at each other. A tense silence was cycling around them.

“Grandpa... Think about your age, such an elegant machine doesn’t suit you.”

“What nonsense is this, Emrys? You lack experience boy, it’s too early to ride the lion and roar for you. I am the one known as the ‘Lion King’, this machine is like it’s tailor made for me.”

Invisible sparks broke out between the two as neither side gave in, their aura shaking the air. The guards around them didn’t know what to expect if they really got it on, and didn’t think anyone could calm them down.

“Right, Grandpa, how about a training exercise? I will let you see the results of my studies.”

“Oh? You want to take it by force? You’ve got guts! To the arena, men, get me my sword!”

Before the people around could stop them, the two dashed for the training arena. Only the shocked Eru and guards were left behind.

“I heard his highness resembles his Excellency Ambrosius... But that is too uncanny.”

That thought was obviously shared by everyone present.

Moments later, the scene shifted to the training arena used by the guards, situated near the royal castle.

Hot air blew across the brownish ground as two Karrdator faced off against each other with different weapons in hand.

“You asked for a sword, so why is there a Silhouette Knight...?”

The ones piloting the machines were naturally Ambrosius and Emrys. News of the retired king and prince having a training spar spread in the castle in no time, and something went wrong somewhere, so the soldiers prepared the Silhouette Knights. Their efficient actions surprised even Eru.

“Grandpa... Sorry, but I won’t hold back.”

“Stop the bullshit. I keep asking you to work hard, but you just won’t change your ways and live as you please... Let me correct that myself! Grit your teeth!”

“Your Excellency— I think your objective is totally wrong—”

Eru’s retort didn’t reach the two men filled with fighting spirit. Silhouette Knights might be machines, but they expressed the will of the pilot quite clearly. Even without seeing them inside the cockpit, it was easy to imagine their gleeful faces and eagerness to fight from the churn of the engines. When the churning reached its peak, a loud horn sounded through the arena. The two machines charged towards each other at this signal to begin.

In one corner was a young lion that was still growing, the other corner was an old skillful lion which was slightly past its prime. The way they fought was on two extreme ends.

Emrys used his speed and power as a weapon and went in head on; Ambrosius dodged with his skill and counters, not taking a single step back. The steps of the giants shook the earth, making deafening sounds whenever their giant weapons clashed. Neither side sought to conserve energy, giving all they have got.

Both might be lions, but they were not the same. The fight started out even, but gradually turned in favour of Ambrosius. Ambrosius wielded a spear taller than the Silhouette Knight, with a blunt tip used for training. It was said that in a man to man fight, you need to have three times the skill to win against a spear with a sword. This theory was projected onto the Silhouette Knights. From the footwork, arm movement and quick adjustment of the spear holding position, Ambrosius nimbly controlled the distance between them, toying with Emrys who was using a sword.

Emrys wanted to close the gap and charged, but was fended off with a swing of the spear. While Emrys was unbalanced, the spear stabbed at him without hesitation. Emrys twisted the machine, deflecting the strike with the thicker armour, but Ambrosius used the reactionary force to pull away, sealing Emrys’ chance of counterattack. After twirling the spear around, Ambrosius attacked with a barrage of spear thrust once again. In the face of the barrage, Emrys had no choice but to take the defensive.

“As expected of grandpa! You still got it in you!”

“This is the quality a king should have.”

“Eh, I don’t think so.”

They might not be able to hear what Eru said in the distance, but Eru still couldn’t help retorting.

“However, the retired king really has a way with the spear, is he really 60 years old?”

“When the retired king held the post of general, how should I put this... He liked to lead from the front. I heard he mixed with the troopers and fought with a spear... Since he is still fighting fit at this age, it is hard to imagine how he was like back then.”

“Wasn’t he a general peerless in battle?”

Aside from Eru, there were many guards among the audience. They cheered the intense fight that was ongoing right now. Even though military might was valued in this ‘nation of knights’, there wasn’t a need for the royalties to display their prowess. But the two of them were better than most knights, especially Ambrosius who was the renowned general ‘Lion King’. It was incredible for him to be this good despite his age.

And his grandson who inherited his bloodline turned his endless power into speed as he challenged the living legend. When the troops saw their masters fighting so mightily, their respect for them grew even more.

The guards might be impressed, but the fight was still intense. Emrys lost the initiative and couldn’t attack as he pleased. He wasn’t weak, just that his weapon matches poorly and the difference in experience was too vast.

“Your movements aren’t bad, but you are too naive. You can’t even touch me.”

“Aren’t you getting out of breath, grandpa! Are you losing to your age?”

“Enough with your nonsense! Watch! An opening at your feet!!”

Ambrosius shot with his back weapon calmly. The training bullets weren’t powerful, but the strike to Emrys feet still pushed him back. Taking this chance, Ambrosius pursued and thrust with his spear.

“You won’t get me so easily!”

Emrys instinctively knew he couldn’t avoid this and made a shocking move. He used his unbalanced posture to charge with his shoulders, going forward. The tip of the spear brushed against the armour, producing sparks. Emrys stepped into the spears attack range while grabbing the spear he just dodged with his arm pit. Since the spear play was powerful, Emrys just needed to make it stop.

“How’s that!?”

“You got guts...!”

Emrys who entered sword attack range had the advantage— he wasn’t the only one to think that. however, as if he was overturning the judgement of everyone, Ambrosius released the spear immediately. The liberated retired king took another step forward, shortening the distance beyond sword range. Emrys who was countered was shocked and didn’t know how to react.

Ambrosius lowered his stance and swept Emrys legs. As he was grabbing the spear, Emrys’ movement was limited and he lost his balance.

“... I told you, your feet has an opening.”

Ambrosius grabbed his spear back as Emrys fell, and attacked with another hail of spear thrusts. Emrys rolled to evade, shooting his back weapon recklessly. Ambrosius calmly deflected the attacks. Emrys pulled away and got up slowly. The battle returned to the situation when it started.

“... This is bad, you are good grandpa, that was exhilarating.”

Emrys was covered with scratches on his armour, and some parts were even dented after he rolled. His back weapon was still useable, but the zeroing was off after his fall. His crystal tissue wasn't damaged, which was really lucky. Even though he looked a bit beat up, Emrys' machine was still functional. After Emrys confirmed the power coming from his joystick, he laughed out loud and said:

“Great, this is a good machine, I can still have some fun with it...”

He had detracted from his original objective, but he didn't lose his spirit, and was even more fired up. Ambrosius could feel the fighting intent spilling forth from the machine, and smiled viciously in his pilot seat.

“Hmm, His will power is commendable, but it will be meaningless if there are no results.”

When he heard these words coming from the loudspeaker, Emrys did all he could to suppress his wildly beating heart. He shouldn't be reacting to his grandfather's taunt. If he didn't find a way to deal with Ambrosius' spear, he won't be able to win. The opponent wasn't just strong in ranged attack, he could also defend any attack within spear range. Wasn't there any opening? Any good way to go about it? Emrys kept thinking during the fight, and finally made up his mind.

“... Ah— forget it, stop thinking! The answer can’t be found just by thinking, it is within the sword!”

He decided to find the answer through action, that was Emrys’ way of doing things. He charged ahead without regard for anything, not aware of Ambrosius’ wry smile for acting just as expected. In the eyes of the bystanders, he was just making the same mistake, everyone was certain that Ambrosius’ amazing spear work will fend off Emrys.

But reality overturned everyone’s expectation.

Ambrosius thrust with his spear, engaging the advancing Emrys. They were out of sword range, so only the spear could reach. However, Emrys didn’t plan to take a beating obediently.

Lifting his sword with both hands, he swung, filling the arena with the loud sound of impact along with sparks. He was still out of sword range, but Emrys was aiming for the ‘spear’— Ambrosius’ weapon.

The sword knocked the spear aside, and Emrys slid into its range of attack. Ambrosius reacted splendidly, spinning the polearm with unbelievable speed and attacking with the tail end of the spear. Emrys kept advancing as he parried the spear again, single minded in his will to move forth.

If the strong point of spears was range, then it was dexterity for swords. Swordsman could make small and minute movements to deal quick and heavy attacks. Emrys charged with his unbelievable stubbornness, not thinking about anything else. In the face of this relentless attack, even Ambrosius was being suppressed.

“Waaarrggghhh!”

“Huh!?”

At this point, Emrys' weapon wasn't the sword, but the machine itself. His heavy blow was blocked head on by Ambrosius— Emrys who was slashing down with both hands clashed with Ambrosius who blocked with the body of the spear.

The ether reactor from both machines revved into higher gears, the sound of air intake was blasted out. Crystal tissues flexed as it converted the mana into power, striving to push the opponent down.

When both pilots were operating the same type of Silhouette Knights, the deciding factor would be the 'spirit of the pilots'. If one were to lose in terms of spirit, he would be pushed back and lose the match. In the end, this was the dumb but simple way they decided the match. Both parties focused their power on one spot, trying to overpower the other as the ground became depressed by the feet of the giants.

“Wooaarrgghh!”

Emrys roared as he took a step forward with all his might. An enormous amount of power was pushed onto the point their weapons met, and that explosive moment when the energy was released—

The spear flew into the air.

The result of their contest was Ambrosius losing in terms of strength. Emrys placed his sword on the throat of the unarmed Ambrosius, ending the fight.

“Hmmm, great fight, you have trained well.”

“... Grandpa, did you hold back just now?”

Emrys wasn't questioning it, and was sure about it. Because he fought with Ambrosius directly, so he knew that he wasn't an opponent he could defeat so easily. It was natural for Emrys to think that Ambrosius held back.

"Dumbass, why would I need to hold back against you... To think that my old bones can't beat you down anymore. Forget it, you win, take that machine with you."

After saying his piece, Ambrosius turned and left. His majestic figure showed no sign of unhappiness, not like a defeated person at all. Emrys silently bowed deeply to that back while the guards in the arena stood at attention and saluted.

Ambrosius stretched his stiff body after leaving the arena, and alighted from the Karrdator.

"Ara, it had been so long since I last competed, my shoulders are stiff. My skills had rusted, I need to train a little. That dumb grandchild didn't even hold back against an old man, where did he get that inflexible nature from?"

"Definitely you, your Excellency."

"Even you say that... Ernesti, I gave up on the Gordesleo, but the Silver Tiger is good too right?"

"Don't need to worry. To be honest, both are the same except their appearance."

"Then I'm fine with it." Ambrosius laughed after saying that, and it was a rare sight seeing Eru sigh behind him.

"Ohhh..."

After finishing the match, Emrys came to the symbol of victory— the Gordesleo. It had the appearance of a beast, combining elegance, power and might in its design, showing great taste and uniqueness. The heavy armour focusing on defence gave it a heavy weight regality to it.

“Great, this is awesome...”

Also, the Gordesleo wasn't just a Silhouette Knight to Emrys, it was a prize proving his powers which he won from his grandfather. When he thought about that, Emrys' fatigue was gone and he was filled with energy.

“I won this from grandfather, so I can't let him lose face, I have to work harder...”

Did the retired king think this far? Win or lose, he planned to let his highness learn something.

Eru thought as he watched Emrys who was trembling with emotions. Their interactions might be short, but Eru felt that Emrys was too straightforward. He was crass in his speech, but Emrys respect for Ambrosius could be felt from his actions. If someone like that was to win a machine from Ambrosius—

The pride of his highness will make him perform even better... That's how it is. I don't know if he planned it that way, but I am happy since they like it.

Eru nodded and left quietly. There was some unexpected incident, but he accomplished his goal of delivering the personal machines. After that, Emrys will visit Olvecius fort from time to time with his Gordesleo, but that was another story.

Knights & Magic - Volume 3 - Chapter 25

In the southwest of Fremmevira kingdom, at the foot of the Aubigne mountain range, there was an extraordinary forest.

The locals called the forest ‘Giant Tree Garden’.

It got its name because of large amount of giant trees ‘colossal’ averaging one hundred metres in height.

The giant trees shot straight into the sky, the abundance of leaves blocking out the sun, which made the forest dim even during the day.

To support its massive trunk, the colossal had the tendency to occupy a large area with its roots. Thick and tough roots grabbed hardened the soil of the forest ground, coupled with the sparse sunlight, most vegetation couldn’t survive here. In this forest, survival was impossible without the permission of the ‘colossal’.

“Nothing strange... Really, the forest is peaceful today too.”

Inside the Giant Tree Garden was a Fireteam of Karrdator (3 knights) surveying the area as they patrolled. The colossal couldn’t grow in a tight area because of the space taken up by its roots, so the spaces between trees were large enough for Silhouette Knights to pass through easily. The place might be dark, but it didn’t felt enclosed.

“Don’t be so frustrated, peace is a good thing.”

The team stopped and watched their surroundings. But no matter how wide they opened their eyes, they couldn't spot any movements. Only the massive trunks of the trees stood erect like tombstones. The air was still in the bare forest, giving it an atmosphere of stagnancy and decay.

“How long do we need to patrol like this?”

The team started moving again. The roots of the colossal were not affected by the weight of the Silhouette Knights at all, the force behind each step spread across the ground through the roots like ripples.

“This was what Master whose sleep was disturbed said. It might not be now, but something will happen sooner or later, that's why we Alvanz have to perform guard duties like other units.”

Sound of bitter laughter could be heard from the Karrdator's loudspeaker.

Leading the team was Zarks, who shrugged after saying that to his fellow member of Alvans, tuva.

The patrols had been going on for quite a while now. It was natural for them to complain after seeing the same old dull scenery every day. That was why he didn't restrain Tuva.

“That might be so, but they don't really need to activate us, the guardians of the ‘Althusser ravine gate’...”

“Halt, something ahead, one o' clock.”

Having kept quiet the whole time, the third person— Yunf cut off Tuva with a calm voice.

“Oh... let's stop the chit chat. I will take the front, Tuva take the side, Yunf will have our back.”

Zarks tensed up his nerves and dash ahead after giving the orders, with Tuva and Yunf following behind. The team was cautious of their surroundings, reaching the abnormality spotted by Yunf in no time.

“These is... boulders? No... From the roots? A mimic?”

The large bulge from the ground looked like a boulder that could be found anywhere, but it wasn't normal to find them on top of the roots. However, it was easy to identify if one was to think of it as a creature the size of a Silhouette Knight's hug and mimics boulders.

“Oh, it's a shell? This is definitely a 'shell beast race'. I don't see any other shell beast around, did this one got lost from its hive?”

Zarks identified the creature immediately, but frowned when he thought about the features of such beasts.

The food chain of the forest made up of the special tree colossal was unique too. As described earlier, colossals did not allow other vegetation to grow, and wasn't suitable for consumption by animals as it was too hard. Only a small number of special insects could survive in this forest. In contrast, shell beasts were carnivorous, and it was unnatural for just one of such herd beasts to show up in an environment with sparse food supply.

“What should we do? Zarks, if it was just one that got lost, is it fine to leave it alone?”

Zarks only mumbled a vague reply after hearing Tuva's suggestion.

“... Zarks, the other side.”

When he noticed, Yunf who was guarding the rear had already walked in front of them, pointing with his arm. Following the direction of the arm, Zarks and Tuva were dumbfounded by what they saw— There were more than one shell beast. Figures of similar boulders could be seen everywhere.

“Impossible... Such astonishing numbers. This is bad, they didn’t get lost! Are they a group, or...”

A clicking sound could be heard from somewhere, like the groan of hard shells rubbing against each other. One of it had awakened, and as if a trigger was pulled, a second woke, followed by the third and so on.

Needless to say, the sound came from the shell that looked like boulders around them.

“These fellows are scouts just like us! Retreat, Tuva, Yunf, their main force nearby must be nearby!”

The boulder like shell rise up slowly, revealing skinny legs which dragged the shell covered body forward.

“Jack pot... Yunf! We have to alert Althusser ravine gate no matter what! So they are shell beast swarm? If this goes on...”

The squirming shell beasts turned their eyes to watch the Alvanz. Making clicking sounds, they push the branches aside and close in on the Silhouette Knights.

“Giant Tree Garden will become a playground for them... And they will invade the Forest City!!”

The Alvanz team had already started sprinting without considering a fight, reporting the abnormality was the top priority. A large number of demon beasts began to screech, loud enough to cover the noisy footsteps of the Karrdator.

The serene forest turned chaotic in a blink of an eye.

C.E. 2180.

As the season shifts to autumn, the scorching sunlight became gentle and the weather turned colder. However, the summer left behind a dangerous parting gift.

— One day, a rider came to the royal capital Känkänen.

When the report arrived, the king Riothamus and the nobles were having their periodic conference.

The agenda of the conference was about the activities of the demon beast in the various territory, and the budget as well as combat forces of each nobles land. The distribution of the limited numbers of the new machine models made the discussion even more heated.

A messenger soldier barged into the relatively peaceful conference. For emergency messages above a certain level of urgency, soldiers were allowed to not stand on ceremony.

Seeing how panicky the messenger were, Riothamus had an ominous feeling and frowned

— After seeing the message handed to him by the messenger, his expression stiffened. The first line ‘Top Secret level 1’ was reflected in his eyes. Top secret referred to highly classified matters when a problem occurred within the nation. Only the most urgent and dangerous situation were classified as level 1, so this was definitely not good news.

This wasn’t an exception either, the message mentioned about danger approaching the forest city. Reading on, Riothamus forgot to maintain his composure, standing up after kicking his chair aside.

“This is really... the worst news.”

Riothamus who excused himself from the conference invited his father— Ambrosius over. The message contained highly classified information, he couldn’t just discuss it with anyone.

After hearing a brief account from his son, Ambrosius said this immediately. After dismissing everyone else except for his father, Riothamus hugged his head.

“The report state that the threat came from shell beast type. It had made contact with part of the garrisoned knights, the problem is their scale...”

“Their numbers were stupendously large, right? The reason why shell beast swarm appears... ‘Hive splitting’ right.”

Ambrosius appeared calm, but he couldn’t conceal his disgust. Shell beasts were a special type of demon beast. There were many demon beasts which live together in groups, but the scale of the hive beast swarm was abnormally large. Aside from that, their society was similar to ants and bees, which was common knowledge.

At the center of the group, well guarded by hordes of soldier class beasts, there was a ‘queen shell beast’ that was responsible for reproduction.

The queen would get replaced periodically every several centuries, only one queen will usually emerge during this replacement. However, there were times when two or more queens emerged, which led to the phenomenon of 'hive splitting'. The queen that couldn't wrest control of the majority will migrate, and search for a new nest.

"The problem is that we don't understand true scale of it, so we can't gauge the necessary forces required."

For the threat level of shell beasts, one soldier class is equivalent to just a duel level demon beast, but the difficulty was in handling a large group of them. The difficulty changes according to the numbers, and could even reach battalion level, equivalent to a behemoth.

Normally, forces won't be despatched recklessly without knowing the scale, but the forest city made them hesitant to stand idly by.

That place was strategically important because of a certain reason, a place that was not made public because of secrecy. The guardian knights Alvanz was even stationed there to defend the place. But they might not be able to handle the crisis this time.

"That might be so, but we have to act. Even if it goes against their 'law', we have to send an army to purge the beasts. Most importantly, we have to avoid the inhabitants from being wiped out."

Since they didn't know the scale of the enemy forces, they had to deploy a powerful army and disregard information control. Should they choose secrecy or safety? Facing the first major challenge after taking the throne, Riothamus tried to make this difficult decision.

Seeing his son deep in thought, Ambrosius also pondered their options.

What they need was 'forces that could limit the spread of information, powerful, and

ready to deploy immediately'. Was there such a convenient existence? Searching through the experience he had while reigning as king, Ambrosius couldn't find a clear answer.

They were stuck in this situation, but needed to act fast. As the heavy atmosphere hung over the room, someone barged in suddenly.

"Sorry for intruding! I heard that grandpa came to the royal castle..."

It was the 2nd prince Emrys. Seeing how carefree and ignorant he was, the king and former regent lost their drive and sighed at the same time:

"Now is not the time for greeting, something terrible is happening..."

"Sorry, eh, I was thinking about a training match with grandpa using the Gordesleo..."

That instant, Ambrosius turned sharply to Emrys. the word Gordesleo reminded him of something, and inspiration struck—

"... Yes, isn't there a Knight Order just right for the job? A small group of elite, experienced in large group battle against a battalion level demon beast. If we delegate it to them, we won't need to worry about secrecy."

When he heard the former regent's words, Riothamus came to the same conclusion. Fremmevira Kingdom was full of talents, but there was only one Knight Order that fits this exemplary bill. Seeing a ray of hope, he slowly uttered that name.

... Silver Phoenix Knights!!"

“Ah? We are asking the Silver Commander to make something again?”

Only Emrys didn't know what was going on as he looked at his father and grandfather in confusion.

On that day when the terrible news reached the royal capital, an unexpected visitor came to the base of the Silver Phoenix knight, fort Olvacius.

As the sun sets in the west and moments before the darkness shrouds the land, a Silhouette Knight charged into the fort with incredible speed. Everyone in the hangar was surprised to see the Silhouette Knight 'Silver Tiger' that was emitting a dim glow. It was obvious who this Silver Tiger was given to.

Eru couldn't conceal his surprise when he rushed over after hearing the news to meet Ambrosius who was alighting from the Silver Tiger. Even though the former regent was a free man after abdicating the throne, it was still a huge thing for him to visit personally.

“Your Excellency!? I didn't know you were visiting, what is the matter?”

Ambrosius did not answer Eru, but surveyed the fort as he listened to the Order members gathering at the hangar. When most of the people were present, he spoke:

“Ernesti, no, Silver Phoenix Knights! I hereby announce the decree by his majesty, listen well!”

Ambrosius shouted loudly with a stern expression. He did not show such regal aura even for the Casadesus incident, making the tense Order members straighten their posture as they listened.

“I will make it clear, the things I am about to tell you are not permitted to be disclosed, understand? Getting to the point, shell beasts... A large number of demon beasts have shown up. I can't give you the details, but they are heading towards an important base right now, we have to defend the place no matter what. However, we are already one step too late. To make up for it, we need speed as fast as the wind and power as mighty as a tsunami! Silver Phoenix Knights. Now is your chance to deploy the Centaur Knight, the pride of your Order!!”

After his speech, Ambrosius walked to Eru's side as if he was trying to be discreet, and said in a volume only Eru can hear:

“... The place being attacked is known as the Forest City, where the Ether Reactor in our nation is produced.”

Eru's eye opened wide.

The former regent nodded in response to Eru's trembling gaze. Compared to the fact that he had just learned 'the top secret of this nation', Eru was more concerned and angry about the demon beast army advancing on the vital base that produces robots. For him who devoted everything he had to his hobby, it struck a landmine in his heart. He immediately used a tensed voice even his childhood friend had never heard before to issue orders:

“Silver Phoenix Knights, prepare for the entire order to move out! Rider mode two, red one loadout, roll out when once you are ready! Main objective is to secure the target area and exterminate the demon beasts!!”

After a moment of silence, everyone started moving as instructed. From the visit of the former regent, the urgency displayed by their commander and the content of their orders, they had the premonition that this will be a terrible battle.

Rider mode two, red one load out— This refers to using Tzendrinble and the wagon for the fastest movement speed, and heavy fire equipment to fight demon beast at the battalion

level or above. Concisely speaking, it was a formation with fighting a behemoth in mind.

The Silver Phoenix Knights usually had a casual atmosphere, but they were also veterans who had been through danger multiple times.

Their movements were fast and firm, and in no time, the roar of all sorts of engine came from the hangar.

“Connecting the wagon—! Back, back back, good! Move forward—!”

Tzendrinble from the third squad was the main force that was readied. Under the guidance of the craftsmen, the Tzendrinble in the hangar was connected to the wagons. Craftsmen in Motor Rad ran all over the place to do the fine installation works.

While the wagon was being readied, the first and second squads were equipped with their ‘option works’ of choice. They put on the equipment developed by themselves with pride, and the Kardetolle with red one loadout showed themselves.

The Motor Rads performed task such as moving parts and installation, taking over the task that would usually require Silhouette Knights or human power to complete. Using it in such a manner was what the developer— the Knight Commander of the Silver Phoenix was great at.

Within the noisy hangar, Eru walked towards the Boss who was giving out orders loudly. The Silver Phoenix Knights would be deploying their maximum force, and the Boss intended to do his best.

“Boss! I will deploy in Toybox, please ask Chid and Ady to prepare ‘rider mode three’!!”

This was out of the Boss' expectation. He stopped his movement and was stunned.

"You want to use rider mode three with toybox? That is a prototype which can barely walk, are you insane? I don't need to tell you this, but I have no idea how long they could last in a real fight."

"I know it has its issues, but to draw out the potential of Toybox, I will need the loadout for mode three. If it can move, it can easily slaughter hundreds of demon beasts."

Eru answered the Boss steadily. He was doubtful, but the Boss couldn't stop Eru. They had known each other for years, and he realized that Eru was raging with anger under that smile of his.

"I get it! Hey, set up the brat's horse with mode three! Huh!? Don't ask so much, just do it! They will figure it out themselves!!"

As they conversed with resignation, they continued the preparations with amazing speed. Silhouette Knights from the second squad boarded the wagons of the third squad that was ready. Every Tzendrinble could ferry two Kardetolle with maximum loadout, craftsmen in Motor Rad chained the Kardetolle in standby position onto the wagon to secure it.

Maybe they were affected by the hot bloodedness of their Commander, everyone moved faster than their usual training. After a quarter of a watch (thirty minutes), a grand cavalry army appeared before Ambrosius. This was a powerful force made up of the three squads of the Silver Phoenix Knights.

"Woah, I did held high expectations... But this was beyond what I imagined."

The formation of the Silver Phoenix Knights that exceeded what the former regent imagined and surprised him. Even though they were the only unit that uses Tzendrinble, how did they come up with such a method? Forcefully pushing the query aside, Ambrosius got on to the Silver Tiger.

A large wagon pulled by two Tzendrinble came over, with a Karrdator that was put

together messily on top. That was Eru's Toybox.

"The entire Order of the Silver Phoenix Knights is ready to deploy. Please give the word, your Excellency."

In front of such an astonishing display of force, Ambrosius took some time to suppress his smile, and jumped onto the wagon with his Silver Tiger. He drew his sword and raised it high.

"Well done! Listen up well everyone! This battle will decide the fate of our nation, I have high expectation of all of you! We are going southwest, move out!!"

The sound of the hooves banged against the earth, and all the Tzendrinble moved together as one. Under the guidance of the former regent, the Silver Phoenix Knights advanced bravely towards the southwest of Fremmevira kingdom.

Behind them was the Boss, Batson and the other craftsmen left behind in the fort. They stood together to cheer and send off this army that left in a grandiose fashion.

Click click—the wave of cold hard noise echoing through the forest was too numerous. In the end, they merged as one, producing an endless ripple of echoes.

The usually lifeless cemetery like giant tree garden was full of shell beasts.

The Alvanz knights killed one after another, the stream of soldier shell beasts seemed endless. Frankly speaking, they looked like giant hermit crabs. With six walking appendages and two fore leg, its body was covered in exoskeleton and a large shell on its back. The exoskeleton on it was tough, edged weapon used on them will turn dull immediately, that's why the Alvanz used warhammers to smash them along with their shell. Despite that, defeating one waste a lot of effort, coupled with the enemies' amazing numbers, it was a dangerous situation.

“Hah! There is no end to this!”

“Tuva, move your hands if you have the effort to spare, complaining won’t help.”

“I know that, but this is dragging on too long!”

Zarks fought bravely, as they try to keep the last line of defense, Althusser ravine gate from being surrounded by demon beasts. They took the initiative to attack as defending the fortress was their primary mission, so they can’t retreat so easily. The situation was dire, and the worst part was the scale being larger than what they imagined, as they attempt to hold back the flood futilely.

“Everyone of this is hard and troublesome! If I knew this would happen, I would have asked for the new models from NTR Lab. The power of Dash would make this easier!!”

“Stop thinking about such useless things!”

Zarks’s team remembered the prototype machines they piloted. If they had these powerful machines it would be easier for them to handle.

The Althusser ravine gate wasn’t issued with the new mass produced models— As the number of Karrdetolle was limited, even strategic strongholds had limited access to these new models.

“Anyway, just focus on taking down the enemy in front of you!”

Alvanz struggled in this intense battle of attrition. However, contrary to their firm determination, they were gradually pushed to the edge of defeat. Furthermore, a greater threat struck them without mercy.

A shriek was mixed in with the countless footsteps and clashes of hammers. Before the knights realized something was wrong, another shriek rose again. Zark's Karrdator was knocked down out of the blue. Not only did he lose his balance, he also lost part of his armour.

"Wut... Range attack!? From where? Zark, you alright!?"

"My shoulder was hit! No... Problem, I'm good. Luckily it hit my armour, the armour is gone now, but my arm still works!"

That attack obviously didn't come from the soldier shell beasts, if they could do that, there was no reason for them to hold back. Tuva and Yunf lift their shields to protect Zarks, wary of something that was attacking from afar. The next second, Yunf yelled as he pointed with his hammer.

"Look, far back in the center! There's one that is skinny!"

They followed Yunf's direction and strained their eyes. On the other side of the disgusting number of shell beast swarm, there was a strange shell beast. It's claws were very long, and to balance itself against its long forelegs, the shell on its back also extended backwards, giving it a long and skinny appearance. It was easy to tell it's true identity.

"Oh no... That's a sniping shell beast."

Giving no regards to Zarks and the others, the sniping shell beast assumed its attack position. This foreleg act like a barrel, with a thorn bullet made by its body loaded in. Channeling some of the air in its lungs to its foreleg, the beast proceeded activating air compression spell. The ability to use magic was the reason why it was known as demon beasts. The compressed air expanded explosively in the inside of the foreleg, shooting out the thorn bullet with the high pressure.

The thorn bullets shot out with a crisp sound of explosion. In the dim environment of the giant tree garden, it was impossible to see and dodge the high speed thorn bullet. A Karrdator that didn't belong to Zark's team was hit and fell. That wasn't the only sniping shell beasts as more emerged from the forest, attacking from sporadically from range, crumbling the defense line of the Alvanz.

“Shit! This is bad.”

The defense line that was barely holding against the soldier shell beasts was falling apart from the powerful range shots of the sniping shell beasts. Alvanz did not have time to plug the gaps that was filled by the soldier shell beasts, and had to retreat.

If they can't block the attack of the sniping beasts, they might be pushed all the way back to the ravine gate. They had to hang on.

Despite his worries, Zark continued searching for a way out.

The colossal trees were spread too far apart, it would be hard to use them as shield, and there were nowhere to hide in the forest. At this instant, Zark's Karrdator stepped on something hard, which was the carcass of a shell beast. Inspiration struck and he shouted on reflex:

“Make a barrier... Pile up the dead shell beasts! We can block the range attack of the sniping shell beast that way! If it is just the soldiers, we can hold them!!”

When they heard this, the Alvanz around him acted immediately. Grabbing the carcass by their feet, they bashed the shell beasts pouncing onto them and pile the carcass directly on top. The knights dodged the sporadic thorn bullets as they slowly build a wall. There was no shortage of materials as the ground was filled with carcass everywhere, covering the entire ground.

Shortly after, a wall of carcass was piled high before the Alvanz. The sniper shell beasts made crisp sound as they fired, but was deflected by the pile of bodies. The barrier performed as intended, the hardness of the shell beast saved the Alvanz this time.

Alvanz avoided the threat of range attack and could finally focus on the soldier shell beasts that were climbing over the wall. Zarks felt satisfaction from his effort as he listened to the sound of the thorn bullets hitting onto the exoskeletons. Without the support of range covering fire, the soldiers were nothing to be afraid of. Their situation turned from being dire to having room to spare.

At this moment—

“Is this... an earthquake? No, it can’t be, what is happening?”

A certain heavy and shaking footsteps could be heard from the colossal tree. It didn’t belong to the soldier shell beasts or the sniping shell beast, but something larger and solid. The sound coming from the other side of the barrier made Zark forgot about what he felt just now and click his tongue. They blocked the range attack, but also obscured their view of the surroundings too.

In the meanwhile, the tremor grew nearer— Alvanz took a stance and the wall before them exploded. The carcass of the shell beasts were torn into pieces, falling on top of the Alvanz like buckshot. There shouldn’t be any shell beasts that could use explosion spell, so what could that be? When the dust cleared away, the answer stood before them.

“This is... ‘drill shell beast’!?”

What appeared before them was a shell beast that was incredibly huge, several times that of a soldier shell beast, even taller than a Silhouette Knight. Compared to other demon beast, it’s legs and torso was exceptionally stout, and it’s shell thicker and harder. However, the exoskeleton on its abdomen was smaller. It was practically a moving

boulder.

The drill shell beast wiggled the mandibles by its mouth, making shrill noise to intimidate the Alvanz. Zark felt a chill on his back as that pair of protruding eyes stared right at him.

An ominous shaking hit the forest once more, washing over them like a tsunami. Without even looking, they could tell that there were dozens of drill shell beast coming towards them, as if they were pushing aside the soldier shell beasts. The moment they reach Alvanz would probably be the moment Alvanz dies.

“Is retreating to the Ravine gate our only choice? How long can the walls hold off the drill shell beast? The city forest is right behind the fort.”

Zark moaned. The ‘Althusser ravine gate was the last line of defense for the forest city, they had to avoid endangering it. But they were running out of options and had to take that route.

“... The scale of the swarm is too big. Since sniping shell beast and even drill shell beast are here, this is not a ‘hive split’. Is a matured ‘queen shell beast’ migrating!?”

For shell beast, the weaker queen shell beast would be the one splitting off from the original site, since the stronger one would natural dominate the hive. The swarm of a new queen shell beast were limited, and usually consist of just the soldier shell beasts.

However, the swarm invading the giant tree garden wasn’t just abnormally large in scale, and even comprise of multiple types. Could this be a migration instead of ‘hive splitting’? They only thing they were sure of was that the Alvanz and the forest city was in the brink of defeat.

Alvanz fell back towards the Ravine gate in despair as the drill shell beast methodically destroyed the barrier they erected. The attack from sniping shell beast rained down on them and the screams of the Alvanz echoed in the battle field.

“Run! We have to reach the Ravine gate no matter what!”

‘Althusser ravine gate was built outside the giant tree garden with its back to the mountain, as if it was an extension of the ravine of mount Aubigne. Most of the space was taken up by the city walls, a fort that focused solely on defense. In order to protect the strategic location in Fremmevira kingdom— the forest city, the walls was tougher than that of the royal capital.

The Alvanz who fell back from the giant tree garden ran into the city one after another. Outside the walls, Zark’s team who volunteered to be the rearguard fought off the drill shell demon beast that pursued them relentlessly. The shell beast was powerful in its charges, and was unexpectedly quick on its feet. If they ignored it, the team would definitely be hit by it.

Using the Silhouette Arms culverin, they aimed at the feet of the drill shell beast in order to slow it down. Their shots at its exoskeleton would be deflected, so they focused on disrupting its vision.

“How’s the status of withdrawal!? Is it done!?”

Even though it flinched because of the columns of fire, the drill shell beast did not slow down, closing in gradually. Zark’s team was at their limit. Before they knew it, their allies had fallen back into the Ravine gate and they were the only ones left. If they hide behind the walls, they will have a brief respite from the threat. The ravine gate was wide open, waiting for them to go in.

“Yunf, Tuva, we will retreat just like this! Hurry... But we can’t let these fellows in.”

Zark and his team were planning to put some distance between them and the shell beast and escape, but the surge of enemies didn’t allow them to do so. Zark saw the other two machines retreating slowly from the corner of his eyes while he continued slowing the shell beast, blocking its way.

“Zark! Enough, fall back!”

“It would be disastrous to retreat any further, the gate won’t be able to close in time.”

If Zark went into the gate, the shell beasts will flood in like an avalanche before the gate would close, so he couldn’t run anymore. A single machine couldn’t buy much time either, so he steeled himself.

With the drill shell beast right before him, Zark threw away his Silhouette Arms and took up his war hammer. The sound of shell beasts crawling gradually filled the surroundings.

“If I can take one of its legs, it will buy some time for us...”

He mustered his diminishing fighting spirit and advanced. He could feel the tremor from the ground and groans like thunder some distance away. Focusing on one of the legs, he tried to give his most powerful blow.

As the Silhouette Knight and shell beast was about to clash, Zark saw something strange from behind the swarm. Unlike the shell beast he had been battling, something bright in colour was fluttering in the wind. He didn’t understand the situation, and squinted his eyes to see.

That was a flag, there was no mistake. The sword and leaf that represents the vegetation, along with a shield. The flag of the Fremmevira kingdom, with the emblem of a silver phoenix holding a sword with its wings spread. It was impossible for demon beasts to hoist a flag, so it belongs too...

There was only one answer—

Zark regained his composure in no time and acted quickly. Dodging the strike from the drill shell beast that would have taken him out, he turned around and ran. The footsteps of the drill shell beast followed him towards the gate. The variety of noise increased at this moment, something that was like horse hooves. And it was giant horses that were extremely heavy.

Alvanz saw this scene from the Althusser ravine gate too. Something charged through the shell beast swarm, dispersing them, it looked like a wagon being pulled by two horses. But the horses pulling the wagon were too queer. The place where the horse head should be had the upper torso of a man, a half man half horse monster. Wielding giant lances, they trampled over the soldier shell beasts like wood shreds.

The mysterious creature charged relentlessly at an amazing speed, kicking the minions aside, and reached the frontlines of the shell beasts in no time. It gave a heavy blow to the flank of the drill shell beast closing in on Zark. The drill shell beast slowed down because of this unexpected blow, giving the wagon the chance to move to the front.

After pulling away by inches, Zark charged into the ravine gate and closed it immediately. Zark turned his head and saw from the gap of the closing gate what the situation outside was—the Centaur knight between the fort and the shell beast, as well as the giant wagon it was towing.

He knew the identity of the reinforcement, he had faced them in battle before. Remembering the scene back then, he sighed in relief and muttered:

“... I see, you guys are here. That’s a relief.”

The intense sound of air intake shrieked in response to his mumbles. One of the Order of Knights serving the Fremmevira kingdom, the Silver Phoenix Knights finally reached the battlefield.

“Haha! Seems like we came just at the right time!”

On the stationary wagon, the Silhouette Knight on top prepared to launch. The steel wires were taken off one by one, the Knight that was free from its bounds stood up. The bright golden armour and the chest plate designed in the shape of a lion—the 2nd prince’s personal machine ‘Gordesleo’. When he heard there will be a major battle, he couldn’t stop his urge and came along.

Emrys turned to the drill shell beast before it and picked up the great sword in the wagon. He was fearless before the gigantic demon beast, or rather, he seemed to be enjoying himself.

“Great, that big fellow there, I will use you to test Gordesleo’s sword, a great honour for you!”

The drill shell beast didn’t understand what he meant, but still pounced on Gordesleo. The enormous boulder like body charged at the puny knight before it with the intent to crush everything in its path. Gordesleo did not dodge and met the attack face on. Flexing the crystal tissue within its entire body, Gordesleo swung its heavy great sword. Both parties clashed and it turned into a battle of strength. The vague sound of something shattering sounded out, and the foreleg of the drill shell beast flew into the air. As requested by its pilot, Gordesleo became the personification of the pursuit of strength. This included the pilot himself.

“Haha! Excellent, let me show you... Roar, Gordesleo! Eat my ‘Blast howling’!!”

Emrys pulled the trigger on the joystick, which opened the shoulder armour on the Gordesleo, revealing the internal engraving. The Silhouette Arms on the back also deployed, and both of these started churning. This was a giant magic that combines multiple Silhouette arms, the special Silhouette arms of the Gordesleo— Blast howling. This overed spell belonged to the air control type.

The air around Gordesleo started gathering and spinning around it, the high density refracted the light and twisted its appearance. Gathered and compressed air was released in the pointed direction, becoming a shockwave. The powerful wind was just like the roar of the king of beasts, shooting accurately at the drill shell beast before it.

The single minded concept of pursuing strength could be seen in Gordesleo. Sacrificing flexibility, the roar of the beast king that raise the power to the maximum shattered the drill shell beast’s exoskeleton easily. The appendages of the demon beast that was supported by tough muscles were twisted and torn in impossible angles, spraying its body fluids everywhere. The power of the shockwave blew the demon beast that was much larger than a Silhouette Knight into the air, killing it instantly.

“Fufu, haha— This is awesome, awesome! This power is radical!!”

“I am glad that you are satisfied, your highness. Putting that aside, there are a few drill shell beasts left, can you take care of them majestically?”

Emrys who took out the giant beast in one shot laughed heartily. Behind him, Eru's Toybox stood up slowly.

“Fuhaha, leave it to me! My Gordesleo and I will... What the hell, why did my mana reserves drop so much!?”

“Eh, that's the price of power. Or rather, it was obvious that such a powerful attack drains plenty of mana.”

“... Forget it, Let's see how many I can take out first! Another drill shell beast!? Haha, wait for me!”

Emrys kicked the soldier shell beasts out of his way with his Gordesleo and charged into the forest.

“Ho, I didn't expect to reach here so fast, that was an eye opener. I was hesitant because of the price of the centaur knight before, but maybe we should have built more.”

Mode three pulled by two horses was similar to the prototype wagons, and could ferry up to three Silhouette Knights; Toybox, Gordesleo, and Ambrosius' Silver Tiger. Ambrosius mumbled something totally unrelated to the battle and turned to the gate behind him.

“Ernesti, I will make it clear first. I will leave the demon beast to you, make as much ruckus as you like. That should be what you want too, right?”

“By your command, thank you for your concern... We will head out and take out those damned demon beasts.”

After letting the Silver Tiger alight, Tzendrinble mode three moved forth once more. Seeing it trampling over the soldier shell beasts and disappearing into the center of the swarm, Ambrosius smiled wryly.

“It seemed that he will really wipe the demon beasts out. That is not a problem, but...”

Ambrosius stared at the fortress that was at a loss because of the intervention of the Silver Phoenix Knights, and ordered it to open its gates.

The fierce wagon ferrying the Knight Commander, former regent and a prince headed for the gate, while the rest of the Knights— The Tzendrinble squad charged deep into the giant tree garden.

“Wow, they are everywhere!”

Seeing the shell beasts that flooded the forest, captain of the third squad Helvi frowned. They heard that they will be facing a huge amount of demon beast, but seeing it for real still made her feel disgusted.

“Forget it, let’s get to work! All units prepare to stop and separate in front of the swarm!”

The Tzendrinble squad followed their squad leader’s instruction and split towards either side, leaving space for it to brake to avoid collision with each other. The connection parts on the horses started churning, separating from the wagon. The shrill sound of metal on metal friction erupted along with sparks, braking as it verged on the edge of flipping over. The Centaur knights left the wagon that braked in a cloud of dust and moved off.

Once the ten wagons were parked properly, loud noises could be heard from the still cargo. With the sound of ether reactor churning and air intake pumping, the noise became louder. The mana was sent to all parts of the machine. The steel knights began to awaken.

In the dark giant tree garden, a bright armour of pure white emerged. Its crystal tissue started flexing, giving rise to a chorus of high and low pitch sound. Personal machine of first squad captain Edgar— the white knight unbuckle the wire securing it and stood up.

“First squad move towards the fort and widen the frontlines. Di, I will leave the work of opening the road there to you.”

The first squad gathered to Edgar.

Maintaining its original metallic green with a giant white cross painted on it, these Karrdetolle belonged to the first squad.

“Yeah, alright. Second squad split into fireteams and take a charging formation, clear the road to the fort. We will deal a crushing blow to them later!”

On the other side, a bright red armour appeared.

That was the personal machine of the second squad captain Dietrich— a crimson knight. The second squad Karrdetolle that followed him was painted with a large scarlet cross. They held swords, spears, great swords, war hammers, halberds, staffs and Silhouette Arms, all of them offensive weapons. This was why they were known as the ‘gangbangers squad’ in the Silver Phoenix Knight.

The one leading the way was the captain himself. Their machines were strengthened, even their swords were wider and heavier. The strengthened offensive machine swung its sword and easily slice the soldiers through shell and sinew. The second squad behind him widened the path created by their captain, paving a way made of demon beast carcasses through the forest.

The first squad went through the passage where the enemy numbers dropped drastically,

successfully taking the only road to the ravine gate in no time.

“Next will be the real fight! Don’t let your guard down and wipe out the demon beasts. Maintain the defensive formation and advance, push them back to the forest!”

The first squad responded to Edgar’s command loudly. For them, defence wasn’t just protecting their own safety. Similar to how Edgar bash the demon beasts with his shield, the tactic of pushing the frontlines ahead straight on was a form of offense that came from powerful defence.

Silver Phoenix Knights which had the powerful new models might not match Alvanz in numbers, but they displayed overwhelming combat prowess. The demon beasts swarm finally realize their adversaries were too much for them to handle. the shell beasts used their unique communication method to summon the drill shell beast, roping them in to expel the enemy. When he saw the giant demon beast coming at them, Edgar slightly raised his eyebrows on his stern face.

Before he could do anything, someone already acted.

“Hmm, it is impressive... Well, not as tough as the behemoth. Leave these types to me.”

After Dietrich said what he wanted to, Guyalinda started running.

The shoulder and waist part of the machine started to deploy, opening to the back. The sound of air intake started revving, and a ring of explosive fire appeared behind Guyalinda. It turned into a heat wave in an instant, accelerating the machine drastically.

Guyalinda was installed with Magi Jet Thruster. It might be a simplified version of the original, it would be just as useful if used adequately.

The movement of the shell beasts couldn’t keep up, and Guyalinda reached the drill shell beast before it could speed up. When Guyalinda rush by the shell beast, it shot the

lightning frail embedded in its gauntlet at the beast's head. The accelerated metal piece was more powerful than its size suggest, smashing right into the protruding eyes, crashing the eyeballs and shell as it pierce into the beast's body.

“Here's the tip.”

Right after this, the in-built Silhouette Arms in Guyalinda's gauntlet groaned. Tactical level electricity coursed right into the shell beast through the wire. Even the tough giant beast couldn't withstand the direct hit to its head. After spasming for a while, it collapsed.

“How undramatic...”

As Guyalinda was trying to end it coolly, Aldelecumber pushed him aside and stood before him with flexible coat deployed. Thorn bullet was deflected by the coat the next second away from the knights. Aldelecumber's cold stare pierced the stunned Guyalinda,

“Don't be careless, Di. We might have the upper hand, but the enemy isn't weak.”

“Alright, alright, yes you have a point. Phew, I'm saved!”

While the two were conversing, the shadows squirming in the shadows, sniping shell beasts renewed their attack, the thorn bullets came flying with a crisp explosive sound. Di knocked the bullets away with his swords, but was stopped by Edgar when he was about to charge the demon beast.



“Leave that to me, that’s my area of expertise.”

It was Aldelecumber’s turn to assault. The flexible coat on its shoulder moved as it ran. The barrage of thorn bullets changed its trajectory after making sparks on the angled armour.

The sniping shell beast had powerful range attacks, but was weaker in other aspects. Their strange body shape made their movement slow, ill fitted for melee combat. These types of demon beasts requires soldier to guard it in order to maximize its power.

However, Aldelecumber who thought nothing of its prided range attack was its natural nemesis. Despite its limited intellect, the sniping shell beast realize the approaching danger and fired multiple, but none of it hits.

Maybe it was to protect the sniping shell beast, or maybe they just want to repel the enemy, the soldier shell beast formed a wall before Aldelecumber. Edgar operated the flexible coat silently. The improved version of the moveable armor flexible coat had Silhouette Arms on the inside of the armor surrounding the machine.

As he opened the armour, Edgar targeted the demon beast and fired consecutive magic shots with the guidance of the aiming system. The fiery bullet flew with an orange burning tail behind it, landing accurately onto the soldier's body before exploding under as dictated by its script. The blaze from the fiery bullet blew the abdomen along with its exoskeleton into shreds.

In the face of the unstoppable Aldelecumber, the sniping shell beast stopped its resistance and prepared to escape. But unfortunately, Edgar won't let it flee.

Adelecumber closed its distance to the slow sniping shell beast and raised the small kite shaped shield on its left arm. This shield might be small, but its edge was much sharper, similar to arrow heads. Using the momentum of his sprint and the flexibility of his crystal tissue, the focused heavy strike pierced the sniping shell beast. The shield which was tougher than a sword structurally stab into its head, the impact shaking the entire body of the demon beast. With the sound of a shattering bang, the sniping shell beast collapsed in a heap and died.

"Squad, advance! We will meet some resistance, but nothing we can't handle."

"Roger. Second squad! Surround the drill shell beast, take them out one at a time!"

Even the powerful drill shell beast couldn't faze them, the only advantage the shell beast swarm had left was numbers. The soldier shell beasts flooded their enemy in an attempt to overwhelm them, but someone intercepted them with a heavy blow, as if they were waiting for this. It was the third squad made up of Tzendrinbles.

While the first and second squads were displaying their prowess, the third squad had been charging around the forest in formation. The orderly ranks of Centaur Knights charged at the same time, leaving a trail of destruction behind, massacring the enemy one sidedly.

The charge of the Tzendrinble was matchless, but their strongest point was in their mobility. The Centaur Knights moved around the battlefield freely, the more they ran, the more carcasses they left behind. The enemy was disrupted by the charge and unable to use their numerical advantage, which sealed off all the means of attack they had.

The appearance of the Silver Phoenix Knights made the situation for the shell beast swarm dire.

The tide of the battle turned drastically hence forth.

Knights & Magic - Volume 3 - Chapter 26

After dropping off the former regent and prince at the ravine gate, the twin's Tzendrinble pulled the wagon containing Toybox that was piloted by Eru into the depths of the giant tree garden courageously.

They met resistance from the shell beast along the way, but defeated these forces with the powerful attacks of Tzendorg. Despite that, the number of enemies flooding them kept increasing. The strong adversary with amazing strength made them wary.

“It doesn't look good! There are still more behind!”

“What should we do Eru? It will be terrible if they surround us, should we seek another route or turn back?”

No matter how powerful Tzendorg was, it was still just one machine. They will be surrounded and crushed by their foes if this went on. In contrast to the hesitant twins, Eru was decisively in his judgement to forge ahead— He came up with a plan.

“Maintain current course, deploy the equipment of mode three. Make a pin point charge with support from magic shots.”

“I have been waiting for this!”

“Under— stood—!!”

This wagon known as mode three wasn't just a giant transportation device, it could also display the power of the cavalry to the fullest, a prototype equipment used purely for battle.

Tzendorg was connected to the wagon behind which was loaded with all sorts of equipment. The two pilots busied themselves with their control stick and buttons, doing the necessary preparations.

“We are going, Eru! Releasing secure belts... Battle transformation, begin—!!”

The moment they gave the command, the back half of the wagon broke away. Eru sat on the remaining front half grabbing a connector with Toybox. Toybox supplied mana and script to the wagon, moving the armour around it.

Most of the wagon was made up from auxiliary arm and flexible coat. The sub arms lift the armour as instructed and changed its deployment, concentrating on the seated Toybox. At the same time numerous equipment kept within the armour was revealed. Huge foldable blades jut out on either side with a dim glow, while two Silhouette Arms were erected to Toybox's sides.

“Battle transformation complete... Presenting the mode three equipment ‘chariot’!!”

It looked totally different from a huge wagon. The armour covering all angles, beast slaying sword for melee and the Silhouette Arms ‘Culverin’ jut out intimidatingly, it was truly a chariot.

Tzendorg expelled gas really loudly and increased its charging speed, dragging the heavy chariot in a gallop.

‘Culverin’ showed its fangs to the shell beast, it was meant to be mounted on a chariot, a

powerful Silhouette Arms not meant to be wielded by hand.

The magic shots that glowed bright red flew towards the shell beasts blocking the chariot's path. Piercing the shell with ease, the 'Culverin' sent many of the demon beasts to a fiery death. Mana supply of the 'Culverin' didn't come from Tzendorg. Instead, it tapped on Toybox's mana pool. Toybox was flawed as a Silhouette Knight, but it had plenty of mana to spare because of its multiple ether reactors.

Toybox relied on the mobility of Tzendorg to move while using most of its mana to attack. It was named a chariot, but its use exceeded that with its turret on a moving platform and was closer to a tank.

The chariot charged at top speed towards the wall of shell beasts that was decreasing due to the barrage from 'Culverin'. Enemies right in its path were struck down by the lance of Tzendorg, while the adversaries around them were slain by the beast slaying swords. Instead of an edged weapon, the beast slaying sword looks closer to a blunt weapon. With the inertia of the chariot, the thick metal blades could cut through the shells of the beasts.

The further the chariot advanced, the larger the body count of the shell beasts was. They forged ahead through unstoppable courage and strength.

As the chariot took out the shell beasts in its path, it headed deep into the forest.

The giant tree garden was a boring place. All you could see was endless gigantic trees. This numbed their sense of time and position. Ady was the one to tire of this boring sight first.

"Nah Eru, where are we going?"

"Well, why do you think the shell beasts attacked us?"

She tilted her head in response to Eru's counter question, and Chid answered in her stead.

"Ah, because they are 'splitting hive', so they are leaving their original swarm."

"That is correct. From the structure of shell beast society, there must be a queen at the center of the swarm. Hive splitting occurs because of the birth of a new queen, so we have to take out the queen to stop this 'invasion'. I heard the queen shell beast is a tough nut to crack, that's why we will deal with her with our mode three."

"I see. Great, the bigger the opponent, the more exciting it is!"

The trio chatted casually, but Tzendorg didn't slow down as it sped through the forest. No enemy showed up to stop them, and they pressed on with a speed normal Silhouette Knights couldn't match, allowing them to break through the sturdy barrier of the soldier shell beasts.

The weird thing happened suddenly. A shrill sound of crushing shook the atmosphere. The scene before their eyes stunned them— Colossal trees that were as tough as normal demon beasts was crushed mercilessly, falling along with its broken branches.

"... Jackpot?"

Even Silhouette Knights would find it tough to snap colossal trees, and was impossible for humans to achieve. To meet something that could pulverise the giant trees... There were not many answers that would fit.

In the dust cloud that was sky high, they could see a giant and dense shadow. Its head was about the same as the colossal trees around it so Eru and the rest thought it was the trunk of a tree. However, they quickly realized that thing moved, and was actually the leg of a demon beast.

“Eru! A super huge one came out!”

“Yup, that is probably the queen shell beast... It is bigger than I imagined.”

Even Eru couldn't hide his worry. The demon beast emerging from the dust cloud was much more massive than they imagined. Surprisingly, the top of the body could touch the leaves of the colossal trees, with the legs as thick as the colossal trees responsible for most of its height. No wonder they were mistaken.

From far, its body structure consisting of six walking appendages and two claws were similar to the other shell beasts. Its torso that was covered in exoskeleton bent like a shrimp. The most prominent thing was the part hanging below its abdomen, which wasn't protected by shell like normal shell beasts. It was several times larger than its torso.

The scientific name was 'incubator shell', the organ that produced eggs for shell beasts. Eggs produced by the queen would hatch inside its body, and the hatchling's infancy would be spent inside the incubator shell, only leaving when it was matured. Apart from being the only one capable of reproduction, it was also the nest itself, the embodiment of the swarm.

I see, so the gigantic legs is for supporting that massive belly, Eru thought nonchalantly.

However, there was no way that they would know that a queen splitting hives would not had grown an incubator shell yet, since it hinders movement and was an obvious weak point. A queen that functions as a nest migrating— that was an abnormality for the behaviour of shell beasts. The main reason was that the swarm had grown far beyond normal standard.

“The problem isn't the size, but the toughness. Let's try attacking.”

In the face of the humongous demon beast, their fighting spirit continued to burn bright. The chariot charged towards the feet of the queen shell beast. Maybe it didn't notice or didn't care, the queen continued its slow pace that send tremor through the ground. The heavy incubator shell was a heavy burden and the queen couldn't go any faster.

“Let’s stop its movement, go for the legs!”

Toybox aimed the Culverin on the chariot and fired directly at the demon beasts legs. The queen seemed to notice them and stopped. Using this chance, the chariot advanced, shearing at a leg with the demon slaying sword as they passed by— but the attack was ineffective, knocking the chariot into the air because of the reactionary force instead.

“Ohh! Hyaa!?”

The heavy chariot went airborne because of the collision and started spinning. The twins in the pilot seat widened their eyes helplessly. Both chariot and pilots would take heavy damage if this went on.

Immediately after this, a bright flame shot out from the airborne chariot. It was Eru who activated Toybox’s magi jet thrusters. The powerful propelling force countered the spinning momentum, restoring their balance. After this close shave, the chariot which was about to flip over landed safely. The group was silent for a long while as the chariot kept going as if nothing was wrong.

“... Let’s not attack the legs.”

“Yeah, agreed.”

The trio broke out in cold sweat and decided to pull away from the queen. Although the chariot avoided the fate of being destroyed, the demon slaying sword had a crack because of the impact earlier. If they did it again, it will definitely snap.

“It must be tough since it could support such a massive body. Destroying it with brute force should be impossible.”

“What should we do, Eru? Even mode three was knocked back, this is very bad.”

“Eh, let’s attack the weak spot head on.”

The chariot turned back after making a large detour, charging the queen shell beast once more. The queen finally noticed the small object running around it and adopted an intimidating pose against them. It stomped on them when it saw the chariot making a beeline for it.

“Turn—!”

Tzendorg made a sharp turn, tilting the body dangerously to dodge the stomp. With a burst from Toybox, the chariot following behind also adjusted its direction of movement.

Next, Eru fired the Culverin in rapid succession after the queen stopped momentarily. He didn’t aim for the leg, but the large weak spot, the incubating shell. His shots were fired haphazardly, but he couldn’t miss such a prominent target. Crimson magic bullets flew into the abdomen hanging below it, bursting into hellish flames as dictated by its script. A bright blossom of explosion appeared on the stomach of the queen.

The relaxed shell beast queen lost its balance for the first time and shrieked in pain. The powerful ‘Culverin’ roasted the inside of the incubator shell. Flames burst out from the queen’s abdomen and it fell onto the ground.

“Oh, that was unexpectedly easy.”

“Eru, why didn’t we do that instead of charging from the very start?”

No one answered Ady’s comment.

“Anyway, let’s go back since we had settled this...”

Chid relaxed and said after the unexpected battle outcome, but was overshadowed by a

terrifying scream from behind. Although the shell beast queen stopped momentarily after its incubator shell was burned, it didn't die.

Blowing huge amounts of foam from its mouth, it searched its surrounding with its focused protruding eyes. Finally, the queen found its hated enemy and was coloured with rage.

The shell beast queen stood with the sound of muscle tissue ripping. It came from the abdomen connected to the incubator shell. It grew louder as its movement became bigger before finally breaking off the incubator shell with a loud snap.

The incubator shell was an important organ for the queen, but losing it doesn't lead to death; as long as its main body survive, it could be regenerated. However, it would take a rather long time, which was a critical blow towards the survival of the swarm.

"Oh, her majesty is angry, let's get away for now."

Before Eru even finished, the twins was already pushing Tzendorg to escape. When it saw what they were doing, the shell beast queen also started moving. Without the burden of the incubator shell, the queen moved with astonishing speed, as if all its slow movement before was a lie. Its massive strides allowed it to move even faster than the chariot. Catching up in no time, it used its legs to stomp mightily.

"Oh no."

The powerful legs struck like an explosion, falling onto the path they were heading in, cracking the ground and the roots as it shook the ground. If they crash into it head on, they would be done for. The twins changed direction with Tzendorg in a hurry. Toybox's magi jet thrusters roared, and their effort in unison completed the impossible tight turn.

Swerving left and right, they kept changing their direction of advance, displaying a nimbleness a heavy cart wouldn't be capable of. They avoided each and every one of the queen's stomping feet.

The queen was relentless in each pursuit, stomping all over the place in order to crush the chariot. It seemed inevitable for them to be pulverised, but despite being forced to the brink, they managed to evade their death.

“We made it through!”

“Head straight for the forest!!”

The chariot slid in between the giant trees while the shell beast queen was hindered by its massive body. Using this chance, they bought more time and distance in order to discuss their strategy against the wrath of the queen.

“Shit, it is fast and hard, mode three can’t take her out, what should we do!?”

“Yeah, being tough and hard is fine, but it is fast too.”

The sound of the shell beast queen rampaging and breaking colossal trees could be heard from behind. It had no intention of giving up, and was filled with the resolve to chase them wherever they might go.

“Sigh, this is bad right, Eru? Wouldn’t it be dangerous if we run around with the shell beast queen in tow?”

If the Silver Phoenix Knights had to face the shell beast queen which was capable of snapping colossal trees, it would be a hard fight. Even if the Silver Phoenix Knights could handle it, they need to watch out for Alvanz behind them too. Just imagining bringing the thing behind them along gave them the chills.

“... True. Alright, change of plans. Please continue to circle around the forest and grab its attention. If it stops, do what you can to attack it.”

“Roger! And you?”

“I... Will seek an audience with her majesty.”

Eru released the securing harness as he spoke. By opening up the armour of the chariot, Toybox would be able to move independently. He then detached the Culverin on the chariot, and held on to it with the sub arms on the back of Toybox. By using both of the sub arms, Eru finally managed to secure the heavy lance onto his machine.

At this moment, Tzendorg dodged into the shades of the colossal trees. The moment the queen's gaze was covered by the giant trees, Eru's Toybox leapt off the chariot. He observed the shell beast queen from the shadows, and saw that the queen was only tracking the prominent chariot, not realizing he had alighted.

“Alright, the main event will be coming up...”

Eru activated the magi jet thrusters on Toybox's waist and shoulders and kept the crystal eye on to the trunk of the colossal tree. Sound of explosion erupted. Toybox started accelerating and jumped onto the trunk, using the propelling force to run up the tree vertically. He was planning to use the magi jet thrusters to aid the Silhouette Knight in climbing a tree. Eru's action was crazy as usual.

Eru forced the heavy machine made from steel and crystal tissue up the trunk with incredible speed. However, the magi jet thrusters output dropped suddenly midway, and the unbalanced Toybox twisted its movement direction drastically.

“This is nothing!”

Eru kicked off the trunk, pushing off towards a branch nearby and grabbed on. The thinner branch started cracking and falling, which softened Toybox's landing. He was lucky that the colossal tree could withstand the weight of a Silhouette Knight. If anything went wrong, he might have fallen to the ground directly.

“I don't feel safe using huge amount of mana. If I knew this would happen, I would have prepared some anchor wire... I will review it after going back.”

Eru started grumbling. The failure of the magi jet thrusters was due to the structural flaw of Toybox, leading to the unstable control over the ether reactors. Short burst was fine, but operation over a long period was unstable like hugging a time bomb. All he could do was to deal with it one step at a time. Eru rested the machine a bit, and started climbing the tree once the output was stable. He didn't run up the trunk directly, but jumped from one branch to another.

The shell beast queen was right in front of him. Its protruding eyes turned when it saw the giant figure leaping from tree to tree. Considering the machine as just an obstacle in its path, the queen wasn't fazed by it and kicked at the giant tree with its destructive leg. Toybox lost its balance when its foothold was destroyed.

"Well done! Since I already reach this point—!!"

The roots cracked as the colossal tree fell slowly. Eru stabilized the machine with the jet thrust and charged full speed ahead, gaining height during the short period of time when the tree was tilting sideways.

Turning the head of the machine, the holo monitor projected the image of the queen leaving after it was satisfied with the destruction it wrought. Toybox focused on its target and kicked off the colossal tree, taking off with the magi jet thrusters at maximum burst.

Not expecting this move, the queen reacted a tad slower. Toybox which leapt off with explosive speed landed nicely on the back of the shell beast queen. Turning its head which was much smaller than its body, the queen glared at the unwelcome guest on its body.

"Ara, greetings your Majesty. Pardon me, but for a mere demon beast to attack my Silhouette Knights... You better say your prayers."

As Eru made his joke-like speech, he struck first before the shell beast queen could do anything, aiming for the giant beast's head. Normal means wouldn't work against gigantic demon beast protected by tough shells. The only way was to focus the attack on the weak points. The head was the obvious weak point common to all living beings, the bigger the body, the easier for aim for it.

The shell beast queen didn't allow Eru free reign. A pair of massive claws attacked the foreign object on its back. Toybox burst its magi jet thrusters sporadically to evade the fierce attacks and then closed the distance to the head while prepping the 'Culverin' on its back.

He was just a step away from the head. At this moment, Eru suddenly turned the magi jet thrusters around and braked sharply. The powerful pressure from changing direction made the entire machine creaked. He stopped because something flashed before his eyes.

That weren't claws, but something extending out from the head of the shell beast queen. Those were sharp blades that send food to the queen's mouth, mandibles. Using its muscles like a spring, the mandible was strong enough to cut steel. The proof was the slash on the chest armour of Toybox.

"You are really talented! If I had known, I would have brought more equipment!"

The mandible attacked the retreating Toybox again. In the face of the impregnable double layer of defence, Eru couldn't do anything. Adding the unstable foothold on top, he couldn't get near freely.

With something foreign on its body that wouldn't go away, the queen started losing its patience. It probably understood the attack from its claw wasn't working, so it changed its approach. Suddenly, a tremor could be felt from under Toybox. It was the shell beast queen lowering its stance and shaking its body violently. With its huge size, its violent movement was earth shaking, Eru who was on top of it felt the movement to be greater than a leaf in a tornado, it took everything he had to not get shaken off.

"Wait, this is terrible!"

The violently shaking body of the shell beast queen became a weapon. Eru adjusted the dampers and magi jet thrusters to balance himself as he jump around to avoid being hit. This will exhaust the mana pool of Toybox really fast, so Eru searched for a chance to counterattack, but the situation seemed dire.

What gave the chance to the desperate Eru wasn't the shell beast queen or Eru himself. Crimson bullets came from the forest, hitting the leg and torso of the shell beast queen and bursting into flames. It didn't suffer heavy damage as it was protected by the shell, the impact still made the gigantic beast lost its balance and restraining its movements

“Eru, are you okay!? We are here to help!”

The one shooting the bullets was Tzendorg which had turned back. It ran around the shell beast queen a large distance away as they fired the ‘Culverin’ left on the chariot. The shell beast queen shrieked when it saw the despicable chariot that destroyed its incubator shell. It had low intelligence, but the queen remembered how its enemy looked like.

“That’s right, aim for us! I will dodge all your attacks!”

After getting the queen’s attention, Tzendorg escaped into the forest. Ignoring the small object on its back, the shell beast queen changed its target and pursued the chariot.

Using this golden opportunity, Eru sneaked ahead with Toybox. The defence of the mandible made it hard for him to attack the head. If that was the case, he just needed to change the target to the joints of the legs. He still remembered the ‘theory of destroying giant weapons’.

Toybox transferred the ‘Culverin’ secured by the sub arms to his hands and aimed for the joint connecting the legs. The two ether reactor on Toybox churned angrily at full speed, channeling powerful mana into the Silhouette Arms. The magic bullet fired from an extremely close distance pierced the joint with flaming heat. With the protection of strengthening magic, a single shot won't have much effect. Eru shot twice more and hide after seeing their explosion. The next second, a column of fire erupted from the base of the shell beast queen.

The queen squirmed its body as it shrieked. No matter how tough the shells were, it couldn't cover the joints as that would prevent movement. Even the colossal beast

couldn't take the powerful shots of the 'Culverin'.

Eru struggled to balance on the suffering beast and attack the leg besides it. The magic shot erupted into explosion again and the queen spasm with each blow, but its movement was growing weaker. The legs on just one side was attacked, causing the its colossal body to tilt.

"Don't be shy, here, have one more."

Eru shot at the tilting shell beast queen from the side, the impact finally pushing the queen off balance. Once the joints supporting the legs were burned, it couldn't fight against the pull of gravity. The colossal beast fell into a cloud of dust silently.

Toybox stayed on its back until the last moment before jumping into the air at the last moment. Eru attempted to slow his descent with his magi jet thrusters, but his earlier reckless action made the output unstable, making it impossible to slow down.

"Toybox, just hang on! Let me see your spirit!"

Eru pushed the remaining mana into the side propeller, forcefully changing the direction of his drop. Tzendorg that was pulling the chariot rushed to the spot under him.

"Leave catching Eru to me—!"

Toybox aimed for the chariot and fell into it. During the moment of impact, the flexible coat and sub arms took the place of shock absorbers, barely catching onto Toybox. A sharp cracking sound could be heard from all over Toybox. Part of its inner skeleton and muscle tissue broke, but Eru didn't cared and focused on the chariot. He activated the flexible coat and beast slaying sword, ready for battle.

"Give it the final blow! Ady, Chid, turn back!"

The two of them gave reliable acknowledgements. Tzendorg galloped at top speed with the chariot in tow.

When the dust clear, the shell beast queen was still on the ground. Its legs were broken and it couldn't move. Being large and standing tall worked against it as it suffered severe injuries crashing into the ground. Despite its condition, the queen was still struggling. Blood dripped out from its mouth as it move its legs in an attempt to move.

Sound of horse hooves rose. In order to deal the final blow to the shell beast queen, the chariot charged at full speed. The queen had no way of defending itself. Its mandibles broke during the fall; it could still move its claw, but its attack range was limited. Its other legs wouldn't help much.

“Checkmate.”

Eru dodged its last ditch kick and the chariot charged pass the shell beast queen's head with its remaining beast slayer sword. The heavy steel plate powered by the insane speed of the chariot crashed into the head shell that was already crumbling from its fall, smashing it apart. The head of the queen splitted and its contents sprayed out. The queen exhaled for the final time.

“Yay! We really did it this time, Eru!”

“Yes, thank you for the hard work, you two. Well then, let's meet up with the others.”

“Roger!”

The trio didn't have time to be emotional after taking down the shell beast queen and hurried back to Althusser ravine gate.

With the Knight Commander's return, the Silver Phoenix Knights became even more powerful. After losing their queen, the shell beast swarm lost control and their only advantage in numbers were lost with the return of Alvanz. The battle that followed was an one sided affair.

After a week, the shell beast swarm was completely eradicated.

Knights & Magic - Volume 3 - Chapter 27

Because of the exemplary performance of the Silver Phoenix Knights, the Forest City was relieved from its biggest crisis ever.

After finishing off the shell beasts completely, the giant tree garden was still in a state of chaos. This was because most of the Alvanz had been tasked to clear the carcass scattered around the giant tree gardens, even though the high alert status had been dismissed.

From the scale of the attack, the amount of damage they suffered was light and Althusser ravine gate wasn't affected at all. On the other hand, Alvanz lost quite a lot of men and equipment and would be troubled by the need to rebuild.

As for the Silver Phoenix Knights, they were as good as new, just slight damage from the reckless charges of the chariot. They were stationed in Althusser for now and assist with the rebuilding works. A side note was that the third squad of Tzendrinble was the most prominent in the fort. Possessing transport capacity and speed far exceeding those of normal wagons, they became a powerful transport team. They were also traveling to and fro busily with cart full of resources today.

Compared to them, the first and second squad performing guard duty had an easier time. While they were performing their rounds, someone visited the Silver Phoenix Knights.

“We are in your debt. If not for you, I can't imagine what would have happened to us, we would probably be wiped out.”

The visitor was a member of the Alvanz, Arnis.

“You are too kind, this is part of our duty too.”

Edgar felt bad when he saw Arnis lowering his head. Edgar bore a lot of respect for Arnis after the experience of losing to him in the simulated battle some time ago.

“No matter what the reason, the fact is that we are saved. We knew each other, so I wanted to say thanks personally.”

“... Yes, if you insist.”

Seeing Edgar being stiff as usual, Arnis fought to suppress his wry smile. He knew such attitude was inappropriate when conversing with your benefactor.

“By the way, your knight looks great.”

Arnis looked at Aldelecumber by their side as if to shift the focus. It might look as plain as Earlecumber, but it had fantastic fighting capabilities, taking out dozens of shell beast swarms led by drill shell beasts. Edgar reacted honestly with joy when he heard the praise for his machine.

“Thank you, Aldelecumber is a partner I am proud of.”

“I thought so. Seeing how active it was, even we want to get the new models. Your entire Order is outfitted with the new models right? It has quite the impact.”

Arnis thought back of the scene back then. Even after discounting the Tzendrinbles, the performance of the two squads of Karrdatolle could only be described as astounding. It was not a stretch to say that they did the job of several times of the old model... No, ten times would be more accurate. Since such an incident happened, it was natural for Yanis to import the new models to strengthen the Alvanz.

“I think it is only a matter of time before the new Silhouette Knights are implemented throughout the nation. Since this is an important strategic base, you should have the priority of getting the updated machines.”

“You are right, I’m looking forward to it.

Arnis seemed very happy when he heard Edgar’s reply and smiled a little childishly.

Several days later, a carriage arrived at Althusser ravine gate with an unexpected guest—The director of NTR Lab Olver Blomdahl. NTR Lab might be an important organization within the nation, but it was hard to imagine how it might be related to this secret city. He came before Ambrosius the moment he alighted.

“Sorry for the wait, your excellency... First of all, thank you for saving our ‘home’! Please accept my heartfelt gratitude.”

“Yeah, I had been waiting. Don’t mention it, this place is important to us too, and we only followed what the ‘law’ dictated.”

Olver nodded and looked at Eru who was with Ambrosius.

“So he...?”

“Yes, there is no better chance than this.”

Eru who didn’t know what they were talking about shift his gaze between the two of them. Ambrosius smiled mischievously and told him: “Eh, Ernesti, I made a promise with you some time ago right?”

Eru nodded. The promise could only be referring to one thing.

“I promised to tell you the secret of the reactor if you made the best Silhouette Knight. The performance of the Silver Phoenix Knight, and the knight and chariot that defeated

the shell beast queen. I am pleased by the knights you made. Hence, I decided to fulfill my promise.”

Eru’s expression shone as he listened. According to the promise, Eru will have the chance to learn ‘how to construct an ether reactor’. Ether reactor was akin to the heart of the Silhouette Knight, an organ that converts the endless supply of ether in the air into mana. With it, Silhouette Knights ruled over other creatures as the strongest weapon. That was the last piece Eru didn’t know and was searching for in his pursuit of building Silhouette Knights.

“... Is, is it really okay?”

“Fufu, this is the second heavyweight demon beast you bested, that alone is more than enough merit. Even though I abdicated the throne, I have to reward you for your accomplishment as the former regent. The reigning king agrees too, so just accepted it.”

Since it reached this point, there was nothing to stop Eru. Changing his attitude, Eru walked towards Tzendorg intending to leave right away. Ambrosius stopped him in a hurry.

“Hey, I will definitely bring you there, so don’t rush. No combat forces are allowed beyond the ravine gates, so we can’t ride Tzendorg there. We have to follow the ‘law’ only those permitted by the ‘Watchman’ can enter.”

“Watchman...? So I have to meet him? Who might that be?”

Ambrosius pointed to his side where the ever smiling Olver was standing. He came before Eru and bowed respectfully.

“Please follow me, Sir Silver Phoenix Knight Commander. Allow me to show you to ‘Home’, my hometown.”

The gate deep in the depths of Althusser ravine gate opened with a dull sound, revealing a road leading further in, away from the giant tree garden. At the end of this road was the place that manufactures the ether reactors and where its secret lies. For Eru, it was a path towards paradise.

After finishing their preparations, the former regent Ambrosius boarded the carriage alongside Eru and Olver and set off through the gate. After they left, the gate closed once again, barring entry for anyone else.

Surrounding the Althusser ravine gate was scenes of barren mountains.

Eru's group traveled up the between the mountains on a carriage which was covered by a thin fog, obscuring their view. The paved road continued all the way ahead so they didn't worry about losing their way. Shortly after, the mist dissipated and their surroundings cleared up.

After advancing a little while more, the mountain peaks were getting even closer. After going over that mountain, Eru was speechless after watching the view from the carriage window.

At the foot of the mountain was an open ground on gentle slope covered by greenery. Some distance away from the forest was an undulating mountain range which extends to Eru's left and right as well. In simple terms, this was a basin covered on all sides by mountains on all sides, a natural haven formed by mount Aubigne. The only road that could access it easily was protected by a fort. As expected of one of the few important bases in the nation, its defence was as sturdy as gold.

There was something other than a basin in the forest. What attracted Eru's attention was the giant city that was fused with the forest.

In the center of the basin was a tall tower, and the city seemed to radiate out with it as the

center. The buildings did not displace the trees, but built into them as if they were merging into the forest. What lie before him was a strange and unique architectural styles, completely different from what he saw in Laihiala and Jantunen. The culture here was obviously different from Fremmevira Kingdom.

“... That is the place we are going, Alfheim, the forest city.”

The epic scene combining manmade structures with nature mesmerized Eru, he only came to his senses after hearing Ambrosius speak.

“Alfheim... So that is the place Ether Reactors are made, and where its secret lies! I knew the manufacturing place is classified, just like the production method... Hufufu, I have finally reached this stage...”

Eru pressed his entire body onto the glass of the window, watching every single thing on the street closely. He won't learn anything by staring at them, but he couldn't help restraining his sense of joy.

“Those who live in the forest city are descendents of hermits, the race of magic and technology, Elves.”

Olver continued the topic as he undid the cloth covering his head, letting down the blonde hair hidden within and revealing his sharp and narrow ears. His ears that were about the length of a palm was a clear sign he was from a different race.

“Elves... Erm, is Mr Olver an Elf?”

“Correct, I might be a watchman, living outside of home and is responsible as the liaison person between you ‘humans’ and home, but I am also an Elf.”

When Eru heard that, he became doubtful and asked with his head tilted:

“By the way, I had never met other Elves before. Could it be that few Elves live on the outside?”

Olver nodded with his usual smile.

“As most of the Elves lived in homes similar to this Alfheim, people like me who travels outside won’t reveal ourselves easily. To us, those who leave home voluntarily are strange.”

“... Is it to hide the Ether Reactor production method?”

That was the part Eru was interested in. To be frank, his curiosity towards the Elves was more like the extension of his interest for the Ether Reactor. Eru who asked suddenly while leaning forward surprised Olver a little, making Ambrosius who couldn’t help smiling say:

“Fufu, don’t be so anxious. Olver’s situation is different, he doesn’t like to show off too much due to some reasons. Other than that, we have our own considerations, that’s why the Elves’ existence disappeared from history.”

Eru was sitting seiza style in his seat, ready to listen. His attitude was prompting ‘tell me more about Ether Reactors’.

“Haha, to be frank, I don’t know much about the production process of Ether Reactors either.”

Olver was taken aback by how passionate Eru was and reminded him in a hurry.

“I would love to explain, but those who are watchmen wouldn’t know about the production of Ether Reactors.”

This much was obvious, they won’t share classified secrets with people who were leaving ‘home’.

“Is that so... but someone will tell me after I get there right? I am... really looking forward to it.”

“I apologize for saying this despite your anticipation... I cannot guarantee that you can learn the production method of Ether Reactors.”

Olver hesitated and said after making up his mind:

“Think about it, what it means for the Elves who are the only ones capable of producing Ether Reactors. It is not just about keeping it a secret... It is something only an Elf can do.”

“It’s fine.”

Eru replied immediately with sparkling eyes.

“After listening to all of it, researching and understanding everything, I will attempt it. If it doesn’t work, I will look for another way, and it doesn’t work, I will give up. I will start with the stage of listening to everything.”

No matter how intelligent Olver was, he had no choice but to give up on his persuasion.

“Eh, that will do. Oh right, there is some time before we reach, so allow me to introduce the Elves to relief your boredom. Ernesti, how old do you think I am?”

“...? About twenty five, less than thirty.”

Eru looked at Olver’s pointy ears and answered bafflingly. Olver smiled deviously in reply.

“You guessed wrong. The correct answer; I am eighty seven.”

When Eru heard that Olver claiming to be older than Ambrosius, Eru showed a complicated expression. On one side was a man with white hair and wrinkles looking his age; On the other was a young man with smooth skin and a head of blonde hair. Looking at them side by side, it was hard to imagine that Olver was older.

However, Olver wasn’t joking. The young appearance that didn’t match his actual age, the Elf race that hides themselves— From these clues, Eru found the answer.

“Could it be... Elves have longer lifespan than us?”

It was Olver’s turn to widen his narrow eyes, showing a rare expression of surprise.

“That’s how it is... You thought about that so quickly, I thought you will think I am joking. That’s right, We Elves have far longer lifespan than you humans, and live on average till five hundred years old. Even when we get older, our appearance doesn’t change, I will still look this way a few hundred years later.”

Eru appeared calm on the outside, but felt surprised within. Normal humans live to an average of seventy years. Living until eighty was shocking in this world. It was about the same for Dwarves, they were just humans that had stronger muscular built.

What if a race that lives seven times as long mixed in with them? Their ever young appearance will spark off unnecessary friction with the other races, and the Elves might even be the ones losing out. The face Eru showed seemed to be expressing that he understood why the city forest was built in such an inaccessible place.

“That’s why you all live in secrecy…”

Eru frowned a little with his head slightly bowed, but Olver simply shook his head casually.

“Hmm? Oh, it’s not like that. Elves live in secrecy because we don’t want to be bothered.”

When Eru who was in seiza heard Olver said that, he tilted his head and crossed his arms. Hoping he misheard earlier, Eru asked again:

“... Eh, I beg your pardon, what did you say Elves were like again?”

“We don’t want to be bothered.”

The serious atmosphere so far was broken by this sentence.

“That might sound a bit wrong. Elves are actually a meaningful race, but because of our long lifespan, our mentality tends to change. The first hundred years of our lives is about the same as normal humans.”

Olver nodded while pointing at himself. Indeed, he looked no different from normal humans.

“However, things become different after that. Elves who lived to two, three hundred years will lose their vigor and interest in their surroundings, spending their times in meditation and slumber, gradually don’t want to be bothered. Elves who are at the end of their lifespan are said to be just like trees.”

This was beyond Eru's imagination. The race that was in control of the secret he craved had a very unique lifestyle.

While they chatted, their carriage was about to arrive at the hidden haven— Alfheim.

From the Athusser ravine gate to the forest city was a road paved along the mountain paths.

Starting from small streams, it congregated and formed rapids, flowing alongside the mountain path to form rivers. Both roads and rivers extend into the center of the basin area, and then into the city.

Including the road the carriage was traveling on, the streets in the city was paved with stones.

The rivers flowing in splitted along narrow water paths, spreading throughout the city. It was filled with thick vegetation which was just a bit taller than Silhouette Knights, unlike the huge colossal trees. Not only were there lots of branches on the trees, the trunk was also bent in a weird way. Their erratic appearance gave those watching it a sense of unease.

The layout of buildings that could be seen from in between the forest was very unique, as if the architecture was built to lean on the twisted trees. Or rather, half of the structure was fused with the tree, which was part of the house. Some of it was built really close together, others had the trees growing right through the roof. The material used was unique; some vegetation was grown to serve as the base support structure, and was reinforced with timber, stone and cement.

“This city coexists with the forest.”

The building was built around the trees, this was the reflection of the mentality of the Elves, a representation of their unique culture.

Shortly after, the carriage reached the center of the city. An exceptionally special building was here, unique even amongst the forest that was one with the city.

“This is the heart of Alfheim, ‘Forest Sanctuary’.”

Forest Sanctuary was a tower of pure white ivory, prominent in the forest city that was filled with the colours of nature. Its surface was curved gently without any clear patterns, with a spiral shape becoming apparent from the mid section and forming a pointed tip at the top, which was similar to some type of shell. The base was wide, supported by clusters of pillars and beams, it even had strange windows and corridors within.

Is this a part of a giant shell beast, as large as the queen shell beast?

As Eru fell into his happy imaginations about unknown creatures, he saw the door opening for the waiting carriage and remembered this was a building used by people.

A slender figure came out of the building with the sound of clothes fluttering. Olver was dressed just like humans, but the Elves living in the forest followed their original culture. They mainly cover themselves with light green clothes, clasping them with accessories which looked similar to flowers and trees.

The Elf who came before the group bowed in a way unique to the Elves, and led them into the Forest Sanctuary.

“Welcome, former regent and Sir Olver. This way please... Elder is expecting you.”

Ambrosius nodded after alighting from the carriage and led Eru and Olver in with confident strides.

The inside of the Sanctuary also used timber that was as white as the outside. Perhaps it

was the excellent design that made use of natural lightning, it wasn't dark despite the lack of artificial illumination.

Rainbows form in some places due to the angle of refraction, splashing the wall with faint myriad of colours. Eru turned his head around, watching the place curiously. Such smooth surfaces didn't seem to be manmade, maybe they did build this out of the shell of some giant demon beast. He continued walking while thinking about such idle matters.

The center of the Sanctuary wasn't partitioned by ceilings, and it was possible to see the tip of the tower when he looked up.

When the group reached the hall in the center, Eru was reminded of the term 'Altar' or 'Throne'. The reason was the person sitting on the chair shaped platform found in the center.

"It has been a long time, elder Quitterie. When we met previously, it was right after my coronation, it has been thirty years since we last met."

Ambrosius addressed the person sitting on the marble chair. Behind him, Olver knelt on one knee, overlapping his hands on his head and bowed. After performing this unique greeting, he left.

Elder Quitterie Kirjarinta— at first glance, the one sitting on the throne was a young girl. To describe her in a word... would be 'white'. Her skin was as pale as the walls of the Sanctuary, even her hair was translucent. When Eru saw the silver pupils when she opened her eyes, he felt that it was out of place. Such colour was not something humans should have.

She was wearing a colourful Elven dress that mimics the colours of nature, and covered it with several layers of white clothes and sashes. It made her look as ethereal as the snow falling on the greenery.

"It hadn't been long Ambrosius, you are just old."

Her voice was as pleasing as music, but sound queer to the ones listening. Lacking emotions in her tone, her voice was flat and lack warmth.

If Olver's explanation was on point, the elderly Elves wasn't interested in their surroundings. And losing interest in others meant their feelings were getting blander. Compared to her voice, the rustling of the leaves in the wind had more emotions.

“What kind of greeting is this? Eh, that's how humans like me are.”

For long lived races like Elves, what was important wasn't youth, but the accumulated age. It was the same for Elder who was at the top of her people, and it was impossible to tell from her appearance how long she had lived.

“Well then, I will tell you about the situation outside. We had exterminated the shell beast swarm invading the giant tree garden some days ago, they will not harm this forest city.”

“... That so. I don't sense any uproar and hostility, thank you for your assistance.”

They went straight into the topic after a simple greeting. According to the agreement between Elves and humans, the two races were equal, so talk progressed speedily with minimal ceremony.

“Yes, since this was the agreement dictated by ‘law’, you don't need to worry. There is another personal matter. You might have heard from Olver, one of my people wants to learn about Ether Reactors.”

Quitterie listened without any reaction and mumbled:

“So you want to ask this too.”

“Me too? That’s right, I am probably not the first to ask...”

“The king of the humans had all asked at least once, and had brought different people each time. The best craftsmen, knights and scholars. All of them ended in failure and you all still had not learned your lesson. No, times are always changing, so this was expected.”

Since she took up the position of Elder, she had seen six kings of the humans. For her, this had become a routine.

“Huh, so it is that hard. However, the one I brought this time was different. An extraordinary talent, a child that will accomplish great things in the future.”

“... You say it is a child?”

Throughout the dialogue, Quitterie’s face remained unmoved. By the aesthetics of humans, her face was very beautiful. However, such a face still made others uncomfortable when she displayed no expressions. Relative to her, Olver’s face was much more expressive.

“No matter how talented one was, humans won’t have enough time. No matter how hard you practice, you can’t reach our realm. Those who came in the past were the cream of the crop amongst the humans, but it was futile in the end. I can’t understand why you let such a young one challenge this.”

“Hey, don’t be so stingy, he might surprise you alright?”

“Ambrosius, former regent of the humans. In accordance of the law, we will give great consideration to your view, but we reserve the right to reject nonsensical requests. While we are grateful for your help earlier, these are two different matters. I have no intention of playing along if it will be a waste of effort.”

“I see, it seems that I didn’t explain myself clearly enough. Of course, we don’t want to make a wasted trip too. This child had extraordinary abilities amongst the humans, since he can operate a Silhouette Knight without a Magius Engine, that’s how proficient his magic is... Do you still think this is a waste of effort?”

Quitterie’s face was still calm, but she only replied after a short while.

“This child... Is this true?”

“Why would I lie to you? He had accomplished amazing feats because of his ability. And the one who took down the boss of the demon beast during the battle of great tree garden is him.”

Ambrosius call forth Eru who was besides him and pushed him towards Quitterie. Eru felt uneasy as the unfocused eyes of Quitterie stared at him. Finally, after a long silence, she made her decision.

“In pursuant to the ‘law, I will believe you, Ambrosius. Thank you, child, for protecting the great meditation and this home. Challenge it then. Since you have the ability, you have a better chance than the humans who came before you. Humans are fascinating, to accomplish so much at such a tender age... Attendant.”

“Here.”

An Elf reacted to the soft summons Quitterie made and present himself with haste.

“Bring them inside. One of them wishes to learn about Ether Reactors, teach him until he

is satisfied.”

The Elven man lowered his head in a unique way, then led Eru and Ambrosius into the depths of the Forest Sanctuary. Eru who realized that Quitterie had acknowledged him followed behind excitedly. When Ambrosius walked passed Quitterie, he looked her profile.

“Thank you Elder. Although it might looked like I am cashing in on a favour.”

Quitterie didn’t look at him when she answered. No matter how beautiful her features were, her unmoving face felt creepy.

“Meditation time is important to us, and there is value in protecting it. We merely paid the appropriate price in return.”

Ambrosius nodded and disappeared into the depths of the building.

After he left, Quitterie who was left alone closed her eyes, returning to her meditation. Her conscious once again slipped into the clear torrents and gradually spread out.

The group walked silently along the corridors that were sparkling.

Leading the way was an Elven man. The passage seemed to be endless. Eru who was feeling bored looked up at Ambrosius’ face and asked:

“By the way, Elder mentioned the term ‘law’, what was that about?”

“Hmm? Simply put, that is the way we humans and Elves communicate. It encompasses the trade agreement between us.”

“It seems very important, but is explained casually.”

“From what I know, the Elves made the goal of seeking a higher existence their sacred duty. Olver also said that young elves the accumulation of experience through activities, but as they grew older, the time they spent in meditation becomes longer. For elders, it won’t be strange to spend an entire day on meditation. After they reached such an age, their view of time is very different.”

Eru thought back about the dialogue with Quitterie. She didn’t look at the person she was speaking to, and don’t move much at all. She lived in a different realm from humans.

“But they are living beings too, they will die if they don’t eat. Normally, they either hunt or farm to sustain themselves... Which led to the ‘law’.”

As the topic got to the main point, the ominous feeling in Eru’s heart became stronger.

“Ether Reactors. They provide us with parts human are unable to produce, and we provide food and security. That is the content of the agreement.”

“The Elves really have no intention of leaving their hidden home...”

“Not all Elves, Olver and some others are rather active. Well, they will become like that after they become Elders.”

Races that had long lifespan were different from humans in many ways, it would be hard to live together. Right now, their relationship had a very good balance, that’s how Eru felt.

The Elven man led them into a room deep within the Forest Sanctuary. It was the same white scenery everywhere, which made Eru and Ambrosius gave up on tracking where they were. This place was illuminated with warm light just like the main hall, the barren room only had a few tables and chairs.

“By the Elder’s orders, I will teach you the knowledge related to Ether Reactors.”

The man said with a stiff attitude. He didn’t have the inhuman atmosphere of Quitterie,

and is probably over a century old, retaining enough emotions to converse with humans.

“Eh, I am just here to accompany him, please speak directly with Ernesti here.”

Shifting his gaze, the man looked at the petite boy who was leaning forward with anticipation after sitting down. Seeing Eru leaning the top half of his body onto the table, the Elven man seemed troubled.

“Erm, what would you like to know?”

“Everything, please start from the beginning. Please tell me everything about Ether Reactors.”

Being taken aback after Eru finally got on top of the table, the man decided to simply execute his duties and not think too much.

“I understand. Well then, I will give a brief introduction from the point of invention...”

And so he explained in detail. What is an Ether Reactor? How did the structure that converts ether to mana came about?

“The truth is, what is known as Ether Reactor, is the heart of living creatures. The creatures in this world possesses mana, there were no exceptions. Even creatures without catalyst and couldn't use magic possessed the ability to generate mana. Other than this, we know that this conversion happens in the heart. Ether that entered the body together with air will be diverted to the heart. It is converted to mana there. At the core of the conversion is the catalyst crystal in our hearts.”

“... Catalyst crystal? Isn't catalyst crystal used to convert mana into magic?”

Eru's question was right on point. Humans could only perform magic with tools embedded with catalyst crystal. When casting spells, the mana will be converted back to ether and released into the air. In other words, the function of the catalyst crystal was opposite of the Ether Reactor.

“You are right, but the conversion isn't strictly one way. Under certain conditions, it can convert ether into mana. To reverse the function of the catalyst crystal, two things are required.”

First was the maintenance of blood circulation. Something within the blood reacts with the catalyst crystal, turning ether into mana. Second would be the script, brain of the living beings— A unique script will be activated by the brain on an instinctual level. It was said that the ancient Elf sage who discovered this secret made the first Ether Reactor.

“According to the stories, the first Ether Reactor was a large silverware covered in emblem grafts, and was filled with the fresh blood of animals.”

He succeeded in generating mana, but the equipment was a failure.

The reason was simple; blood that was outside the body lost their vitality shortly after. It goes without saying that the need to constantly change the blood made the design impractical. After that, the ancient sage kept researching through trial and error for the liquid that could replace blood.

“In the end, he focused on the field that is known as ‘alchemy’ in modern terms. He tested the reaction of all sorts of potions with the catalyst crystal for a period of time that even Elves consider to be long.”

The Elves was relentless in his research, which yielded result after years of research. Elixir— an artificial blood created through alchemy.

“There are also the necessary scripts engraved onto the container, which are known as ‘song’. And the name of the script is called ‘Life Song’.”

The very first script that is part of the instinct of living beings, ‘Life Song’, is maintained by emblem grafting it onto the container. However, this led to another problem, which was the enormous size of the script.

If ‘Life Song’ was made directly into emblem grafts, it would require a spectacular amount of silver plates, bigger than a Silhouette Knight. To compress it to be smaller than a human as it was right now required a completely different method.

“And so, we used the top quality metal that was created by the influence of ether to graft it. Which is the reason why only we Elves can create Ether Reactors.”

“That is a metal correct? Why is that the reason only Elves can create Ether Reactor?”

“It will be faster to show you. Please wait a moment.”

After saying that, the Elven man exited the room, and returned with a block of metal shortly after. From just one look, Eru could tell this metal was different from any metals he had seen before. It had a silvery glister, and the surprising thing was the faint rainbow colour lights glimmering on it. The colour changes constantly, displaying an array of lights. It was definitely harbouring some sort of mysterious powers.

“Mithril... When I was doing my research, I found out the material needed was Elven ore.”

Eru muttered as he thought back on the Ether Reactor explanation he saw in the past.

“Elven ore? Ahh, that was the alias used for the masses. Mithril is rare, only found in places with dense amount of Ether. Its biggest feature was its incredible hardness and extreme malleability, so hard that the race claiming to be master of craftsmanship will throw away their hammer in surrender.”

Eru was a bit troubled as he studied the metal block before him carefully. He couldn't tell what this piece of metal that could frustrate the dwarves had to do with the Elves.

The Elven man reached his hand out suddenly and everyone focused on it— There wasn't anything strange about it, just that it was a little pale for a man. A faint light engulfed his arm out of the blue as he activated some magic. He grabbed the Mithril and it deformed easily as easily as clay.

“... Didn't you say it was extremely hard?”

“You can't shape it by hammering it, but it will react to a certain spell because of its long exposure to Ether.”

“...! Could it be, the reason why you say only Elves could do it...”

Eru looked at his hand covered in a faint light. Looking at the arm as a whole, something strange could be seen— the man wasn't holding a wand, but was using magic.

The man nodded slowly when he saw the change in Eru's expression.

“As you have realized now, we Elves have catalyst crystal inside our body, allowing us to perform magic to shape the Mithril. That is the technique we can use that humans and dwarves can't use. Pardon me for being blunt, but humans don't have the ability to wield several magic at the same time to handle Mithril. We have great mastery over magic.”

The Elves used special magic when shaping Mithril, developing the skills to engrave the scripts compactly and minimizing the equipment needed to graft 'Life Song'. It was far beyond what could be achieved by engraving on Silver plates.

Ambrosius who was listening quietly couldn't help moaning when he heard that. In that case, the other races won't be able to imitate them, and he understood why the Elves refused to make this information public. Their confidence stemmed from the difference in biological structure.

"And that is how we create Ether Reactors. Are you satisfied with this explanation?"

Catalyst crystal, Elixir, Mithril. The components of the Ether Reactor had all been revealed. Eru pondered about how to solve all these problems, and was driven by his interest to ask:

"How is the power of the Ether Reactor determined? What I mean is, what do we need to change in order to increase the power output?"

"It is mainly affected by the size of the catalyst crystal and the Ether conversion efficiency. Actually, we all know that the larger the demon beast, the bigger the crystal in its heart. Another thing is that if the crystal catalyst is obtained from within the demon beast, it will improve efficiency. However, the crystal catalyst within a creature's body will be slightly mutated and hard to use."

The answer was simpler than before, which disappointed Eru.

"It's such a simple way to improve quality, but you all never use it?"

"Well... processing it is difficult after all."

Most of the Ether Reactors are made from crystal catalyst dug from the mines. It is easy to obtain, stable in quality and easy to process. In contrast, just the heart of one duel level demon beast would be enough to create an Ether Reactor. The power throughput is higher, but the quality wasn't stable. Just installing it to churn the engine meant complicated adjustment had to be made to utilize the characteristics of each catalyst. Since the highest and lowest output varies widely, there was a need to install a stabilizing component.

Simply put, it was a lot of effort to make just one Ether Reactor. For a nation, it was better to have more Ether Reactors. Compared to powerful engines based on an unstable supply of materials,, a country would focus more on one with components that could be harvested steadily. This was simple logic.

The unfortunate thing was that for the robot nerd who finally made his way into the hidden city of the Elves, such obvious logic didn't mean anything. Eru looked back at Ambrosius sharply.

"In summary, if we used the catalyst crystal found in a big enough demon beast, a powerful Ether Reactor can be made! Your Excellency, sorry for being so sudden, but I have the perfect choice for this!!"

"What a coincidence, me too. Eh, you want to know what we did to the heart? Of course we are still keeping it. The best choice you have in mind..."

"Ernesti, it is true that we can create an amazing Ether Reactor with that, but the process of creating it would be filled with difficulties. Do you still want to take up the challenge?"

Ambrosius had never shown such a stern expression to Eru before, but he gave up shortly after and relented. That's right, it was pointless to ask. Normal people won't even want to challenge it, and would have given up if the only thing driving them was passion.

If they still sought out more at this stage, they would be an incorrigible maniac.

“Alright, that was something you defeated in the first place, so do what you will with it... take the heart of the behemoth with you.”

And Eru's answer was obvious.

Night engulfed the forest city slowly. When Ambrosius and Olver stepped out of the hidden city, the sun had completely set, covering the forest in darkness. The carriage illuminated by lamps drove slowly towards the ravine gate.

“Your excellency, is it really fine to leave Ernesti behind?”

“He already said that he won't go back before he learns how to make Ether Reactors. I can't do anything with him lying face down on the table and refusing to leave. I might be a retiree, but I can't stay keep staying with him.”

And so Eru stayed behind to learn the crucial Life Song, but found that it wasn't easy. It was larger than the script that controls Silhouette Knights, and could be said to be the largest magic script in history. Just the amount of papers needed to copy Life Song was stupendous, no matter how amazing Eru was, he would need time to learn them all. That's why Ambrosius decided to leave him behind.

“Don't worry, his accommodation and means of going back had been arranged, he will come back when he is satisfied. Before that, there are some things we need to prepare.”

Ambrosius didn't doubt that Eru can learn how to make Ether Reactors completely. Since that is the case, he will definitely get started making one when he comes back. Ambrosius had to make preparations for that moment.

“The future seem hazardous and unpredictable, don't you think it is exciting?”

“... I think that is scary, just what is driving that boy to go so far?”

Ambrosius folded his arms and answered with his chest puffed out:

“I am too afraid to ask as well.”

When they returned to Althusser ravine gate, there was an unexpected commotion.

“If Eru is not going back, I will wait here too!”

“Your excellency, he is our Knight Commander, please grant us leave to wait for his return.”

Eru didn't come back with Ambrosius. After hearing the entire story (the part about the Ether Reactor was covered up), the members of the Silver Phoenix Knights expressed their wish to stay behind. As they couldn't go any further into blah, they had to wait inside the fort.

“Alright, do as you please... Everyone, I will leave that interesting person in your hands.”

The Silver Phoenix Knight was already a group that shared a common destiny. Ambrosius didn't blame them and granted them permission before heading back to the capital with Emrys and the others to tie up the loose ends.

When Eru finally learned all the knowledge of the Elves and returned after satisfying his curiosity, a month had already passed.

Knights & Magic - Volume 3 - Chapter 28

The sun had just risen and the air was just warming up when a Tzendrinble galloped along the Fremmevira highway, heading towards the base of the Silver Phoenix Knights — Olvecius fort. The body that emulated a horse ran with powerful strides, reaching its destination in no time.

A Tzendrinble entered the hangar occupied with rows of Kardatolle and other Tzendrinble with practiced movement. After waving at the craftsmen and knights scrambling around its feet, it moved to the side and adopted a resting position.

A boy and a girl leapt off the pilot seats, they were the twins Chid and Ady. They reside in their home in Laihiala Academy city, and used the Tzendrinble as their transport vehicle. That might be the personal machine assigned to them, but seeing how no one seemed to mind them using the equipment of the knight order as their personal transport, the Silver Phoenix Knights was rather lax in discipline.

Chid and Ady peered into the workshop attached to the hangar, finding it filled with sounds of hammers and yells as usual. As the work kept going on, the twins found the boss and ran over.

“Boss— Morning! Is Eru at the same place?”

“Morning—”

“Oh, the boy is at the usual place, doing god knows what.”

The boss pointed to a corner of the workshop. When she heard that, Ady looked as if she expected that answer and sighed with her arms folded.

“Really, Eru keep staying here and refuse to go home. His mom said that she is lonely because she doesn’t see him much! Say something to him too, boss!”

“Sorry, but I don’t want to do that. Just bear with it until he is done with that.”

The boss answered frankly with his arms folded, but the content was cold. Ady shift her focus to what the boss was referring to.

It was a Silhouette Knight that was being developed. As it was being built from scratch, signs of careful processing and repeated testing could be seen everywhere, with a large group of craftsmen working on it. The entire Silver Phoenix Knights were mobilized for this single machine.

The structure of the machine was unique as well. Just by looking at the inner skeleton, the shape was different than normal, and thick metal pipes crawled all over the body. There was a large empty space in the abdomen, seemingly reserved for some large component.

“Eh, that’s true, it’s the new model everybody is looking forward to. Eru isn’t someone who will stop because someone asked him to anyway.”

Chid muttered in resignation, only Ady was adamant on lecturing Eru directly as she ran towards the corner of the workshop.

The boss watched her go, and returned to his work, yelling at others.

“Hey, Bart boy! Come here! If you connect this pipe to that one, it will be smoother...”

“I know this is important boss, but you had already changed it ten times!”

Today, Olvecius fort was filled with screams of joy too.

In a corner of Olvecius fort’s workshop, there was a strange room. It was partitioned with simple wooden boards and looked to be haphazard in its erection.

It was spacious, with a shelf full of books flushed against the wall, filled with textbooks about Silhouette Knights, craftsmen and literature related to Silhouette Knights. In the center was a giant worktable. It was used to draw designs or make adjustments to components, with plenty of smudges and cuts on it.

Outside the room was the sign ‘Knight Commander Office (Temp)’.

Normally, the leader of a Knight Order won’t be assigned to such a makeshift office. It might sound strange, but the sequence of event happened the other way. It was the Knight Commander who hogged a corner of the workshop to himself, and brought loads of documents in, making a ‘nest’ for himself. In the end, everyone decided to make a room for him.

The Knight Commander Office (Temp) which had such a retarded history was occupied with its owner Eru, who was hard at work as usual. What was different was the fact that there was another person inside with him.

“... That concludes the report this time. Also, I happened to heard something. In the west, the countries there seemed rather tense, one of the countries is probably going to start something big.”

Slender and tall with a balanced figure. She was a member of the Blue Hawk Knights—Nora. She read the periodic report loudly with a calm attitude. The Knight Commander leaned against the worktable and listened quietly. When he heard the last part, he narrowed his eyes.

“Is this related to the thieves? I am confused, why didn’t they make any other move after that?”

“My apologies, these are just unconfirmed rumours. I thought that I should inform you.”

“I understand. Eh, no matter what, it means I still have time right? As for that rumour, if the tension gets any higher, please report to me.”

“By your command. Well then, allow me to take my leave.”

Nora bowed, turned and left the room. Eru watch her leave, and stared into space thinking about something. But he returned to his work shortly after.

Ady came before the Knight Commander Office (Temp), but didn’t go in straight away. She stopped to take deep breaths and tidied her hair and attire. She let her hair grow out some years ago, and it was already covering her back. Her hair was wavy by nature, and tangled on her way here. She tried straightening her hair in frustration, but gave up after understanding it won’t help. Pulling herself together, she pumped herself her and was

about to enter the office.

And she met Nora who was exiting the office face to face. Meeting an unexpected person in an unexpected place made Ady stiffened after taking a step forward. Nora studied her without expression for a moment and leaned close as if to hug her, whispering into her ears:

“It’s fine, don’t worry, I won’t make a move on Sir Ernesti.”

After leaving this soft whisper with Ady who stood frozen in place, Nora walked away coolly. Ady finally came to her senses after a long while, and entered the Commander Office (Temp) with a smile as brilliant as the sun.

After entering, the first thing she saw was a 2.5m giant armour painted blue. That was Eru’s personal Silhouette Gear, Motor Beat.

The funny thing was that the bulky motor beat was cramping itself on the work desk, performing precision movements. The machine had five fingers, but the ability of the bulky body to make such accurate movements showed its powerful potential.

As for Eru who was operating it, he wasn’t inside Motor Beat, but seated on a chair focusing on the fingertips of the machine. He held the end of silver nerves on his hands, which was connected to Motor Beat. Sending commands through the silver nerves, Eru was operating Motor Beat from the outside.

The reason he was performing such an interesting technique was because of the object Motor Beat was working on.

Mithril. In order to shape this special metal, it was necessary to work using magic just like the Elves. And of course, no matter how talented Eru was, he was just a human and couldn’t use the technique of the Elves. This however, referred to him not using tools.

The hands on the Silhouette Gear were made from crystal tissue, which was a type of catalyst crystal capable of performing magic. In other words, Eru was able to emulate the Elves by using Silhouette Gears. That was the reason why Eru was staring at the giant armour while working on the metal with requiring great precision.

Ady was already used to such a bizarre scene. She pounced on Eru and hugged him without hesitation.

“Fufufu, Eru! You are working hard today too! Aunt Tina wants to come home every now and then!”

“Offtt... Ady, I can’t see if you hug me from the front. I see, mum she... It’s almost done, I will go back after that.”

Ady pulled a chair to sit beside him, while Eru continued working as if nothing ever happened.

He had a serious expression. Even for Eru, dealing with ‘Life Song’ while working on the Mithril with Silhouette Gear wasn’t easy. He had to maintain a processing speed near his limit, concentrating intensely and intentionally slowing down in order to handle the load. This meant he couldn’t work too long on it, and could only progress little by little every day. This job might be frustrating and dull, but Eru enjoyed anything that was related to robots.

“This is an Ether Reactor right?”

Ady looked at the metal being shaped by the Silhouette Gear in amazement. The fact that Eru was fabricating an Ether Reactor by himself was a secret within the Silver Phoenix Knights. The only ones who knew were the twins, squad leaders and the boss. As for the other members, they only thought that the Commander was doing something weird again, although they were not wrong about that.

“Yes, this is mine, made by my own hands, a machine core that belongs to me.”

Eru did not stop his hands as he muttered dreamily. Using a battalion level demon beast heart to make an Ether Reactor— With this, it was possible to achieve Eru’s dream. Designs for the frame had already been drafted, the boss and the others were already working on it. Right now, they should be working in the workshop too.

“Hmm— Eru who is enjoying himself is so cute~”

As for Ady, she was hugging Eru as usual, she almost couldn’t stop herself from rubbing her cheeks against his. Eru won’t move during his work, and allowed Ady to do as she please. Since the day he started working on the Ether Reactor, this scene had become a

routine. After enjoying the touch of Eru, she suddenly had a great idea.

“That’s right, Nah Eru, after you finish this, let’s go fight a battle. I will bring Tzen-chan and the chariot out!”

“Good idea. I will need to give it a test right after completing it, I will ask his majesty for the location of nest of troublesome demon beast.”

What an earth shattering invitation to a date. It was hard to imagine that this was the conversation between a young boy and girl, just that the subject themselves were getting excited with the idea and no one was around to retort. By the way, Chid was busy repairing Tzendorg right now.

The only one to who heard this dialogue was Motor Beat, but it just kept working on the Reactor in silence.

Another year has passed, it is now the C.E. 281.

Half a year had passed since shell beasts attacked the hidden ‘home’ of the Elves. Also, since this incident was highly classified, it doesn’t have an official name attached to it like the other incidents. Only the few related personnel referred to it quietly as the shell beast catastrophe.

It was spring in Fremmevira Kingdom. Lush vegetation grew in the wild and the branches of the trees flourished energetically.

During such a comfortable season, Olvecius fort was covered in intense heat. Angry roar of instruction arose now and then as the craftsmen busied themselves even more than normal. Something was about to happen.

The heat came from a Silhouette Knight situated in the depths of the workshop.

Covered everywhere by canvas, it was impossible to see the machine. But from the swell of the canvas, it was clear that its shape was rather unique. It was given a lot of room to avoid being hit, even the repair platform had been modified for it. The effort that had been put into this machine was obvious.

“Alright, lower it slowly, slowly, adjust it the aim! Great, begin installation!”

The booming voice of the boss could almost shatter the glass in the workshop. A component that was lifted by the chains of a crane was being lowered slowly onto the machine. The back of the machine had a huge swell, making it look queer. When the component was placed inside the opening in the back, the craftsmen near the machine's shoulders rushed in to begin their work, connecting metal pipes from it to the machine.

“Are the air intake valves done!? Good, start basic engine rev! Hey, connect that Silver nerve, hurry up! Mana output is about to go live!!”

The machine component had the shape of a giant egg— that was the Ether Reactor Eru worked so hard on. It rose up high on the back of the machine, its size was larger than normal Reactors.

Just like Toybox, this machine had multiple Ether Reactors, one in its abdomen, the other on its back. After reviewing causes of past failures, the machine was built from scratch with the installation of two Ether Reactors in mind. It had a weird appearance, but was successful in overcoming the conflicts in structural designs they faced previously.

Shortly after, the sharp noise of the air intake valve screeched in the workshop, far louder than normal Silhouette Knights. That was how amazing a machine installed with an extra large Ether Reactor was— it raised the power output, alongside the screams of the air intake, it became a deafening choir. All the craftsmen covered their ears in pain.

Suddenly, the noise that was pressuring their eardrums stopped, and was replaced by the clear soothing sound from the machine's loudhailer:

“Beginning confirmation of the mana supply from main reactor ‘Heart of the King’. Lowering output to minimum, entering dormant state. Switching main Reactor to ‘Crown of the Queen’. Standing up with normal power output.”

That voice belonged to Eru, he was seated inside the cockpit of the machine.

Two Ether Reactors were installed, one large Reactor made from the heart belonging to the battalion level demon beast behemoth, the other midsized reactor made from the heart of the company level demon beast shell beast queen. Both were made with all the care and effort of Eru, one of a kind masterpiece in this world.

After receiving the overwhelming mana supply from the Reactor made from the heart of demon beast, the machine awakened. The crystal tissues all over its body started contracting, making music like a wind instrument orchestra.

The first to move was the arms, the four that was connected to the back of the machine where the large Reactor was. Aside from the normal set of limbs, this machine had four additional arms, a monstrosity with a total of six arms. Releasing the chains that were supporting the machine, the astonishingly long arms extended out. Looking carefully, it had five slim fingers as sharp as blades.

Next, the canvas covering the machine slipped off, revealing its true form.

Not only were the arms different, the appearance of the machine itself was also extraordinary. Installing multiple layers of heavy armour was common on other machines, but there was many more on this machine. On top if there were many designs and components that was never seen before, accentuating its uniqueness.

All the members of the Silver Phoenix Knights stared with bated breath, watching the machine standing up. Among them was Ady who was studying the entire body along with the rest, she suddenly focused on one particular spot. On the head of this strange Silhouette Knight was—

“The face of a man?”

The machine mimicked the face of a human, wearing a mask with growling teeth and intimidating expression.

Normally, the head of the Silhouette Knight was an accessory used to gain vision, a component used to place and protect the eye crystal. Hence, defence was its priority, so it was covered in face armour. Even if there was aesthetic designs, it would only be done to the face armour. The machine was wearing a human mask that didn't appeared to have the function of armour, and had a helmet on top. The uncanny human face left a frightening impression on Ady.

Eru smiled in the cockpit, or rather, he was laughing, laughing nonstop. His laughter was unending, there wasn't anything funny, he simply felt overwhelming joy. He had been seeking this for sixteen years, a machine made by him, belonging only to him was right here.

Luckily, he turned off the loudhailer in time, or else his laughter would have been heard outside. He had been like this since just now, rubbing his check and using his hands to touch the places around the cockpit, or staring at the holo monitor happily.

The machine might look strange from the outside, but it was even more bizarre from the inside. Eru's pilot seat was in the middle, with control stick on both sides. Besides the stick was a mysterious device with orderly buttons on it, like a piano. Of course, Eru had no intention of playing music in the Silhouette Knight. This device was known as a keyboard, an input device that enters commands into computers, just like its counterpart from earth.

Apart from the four additional arms, a bunch of special device was fixed all over the machine. To control them, normal control accessories wasn't enough, so Eru implemented something he was familiar with from his past life. Not just that, there were multiple mini Magius Engine inside the cockpit, serving as support to collate the huge amount of equipments. With the keyboard and the pilot's direct control, Eru could finally move this machine that was a coalition of many strange equipment, becoming a flawed machine that couldn't be controlled by anyone but Eru.

“Happy birthday, my robot, my partner, my—”

The queer appearance of the machine wasn't without reason. It exist just for Eru anyway. Be it its function or appearance, it was a reflection of how his passion.

That was why Eru carved his 'origin' into this machine. In other words, the spirit that came from another world, the dreams it couldn't fulfilled was accomplished in such a manner, there was no other answer than this.

This machine was known as Silhouette Knight in this world. However, from how it looks, it should definitely be called an 'armoured samurai'.

“— Ikaruga!”

With a face of an Oni and six arms, the fierce god had descended onto this world.

Surpassing logic and consequences, the representation of power and carnage was shown this very moment.



騎士&魔法³

Knight's & Magic

INTRODUCTION

大暴走

在第三集中，主角——艾爾涅斯帝的暴走依然永無止境。

他一架接一架地做出脫離常識的新型機，

有時還會讓自己置身險境。

為所欲為、隨心所欲的艾爾，在實現理想的道路上勇往直前，

最終將影響範圍遍及王國全土，其規模早已不能以兒戲視之。

艾爾究竟會衝向何方？

喜愛他的破天荒行動的各位讀者，想必這次也能樂在其中。

來吧，就請各位拭目以待這名少年爆衝的模樣！

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter Prologue

Vol 4 Prologue

Part 1

“Zetterlund Continent”

A name that is given to the land which Human and Demon beast reside on this planet.

The land was divided by the great high rugged mountains “Aubigne”,

The west side of the continent is crowded with many countries created by the human race.

People who reside there are called the “Western Union”(Okushidentsu) compared against the only country on the eastern side of the continent,

The country which is the sword and shield of the humanity “kingdom of Fremmevir” located near the great sea “Bocuse”, the area of the beast.

In the foothills of Aubigne mountains, there lies “Raihiara School District”, the city with the largest school facilities in the Fremmevir Kingdom is located here.

“Olvecius fort” *1 which became the base for the “silver phoenix knight order” is located very close by. Although it was referred to as a “fort”, it is not really a facility that was for battle environments.

Therefore, almost all of its contents are “Workshop” facilities. The parking places by the sides of the facilities are wide enough to hold various groups of “Silhouette Knight”.

The pure white knights lead the 1st squadron, The crimson knights lead the 2nd squadron, and the 3rd squadron is made out of centaur knights. This place has some of the most combat capabilities in Fremmevir kingdom.

The machine for knight leader is located in the deepest part of the giant knight group,

.....An “armor warrior” with 6 arms and 2 heart with total height of 10 meters approximately, it was a huge humanoid weapon “Silhouette Knight”.

These knight of steel are made in order to fight magical beast, though it must move like a sophisticated statue, it was well ordered and filled with majesty.

But there was also,

Those who were moving around hurriedly on foot are another story.

The “Knight-Smith” group had been working to upgrade their Silhouette Knight, continue with their bustling work.

Such a blacksmith group, raise their voices and passed instructions to the people around.

And then appeared a muscular physique, a respectable beard in rugged features,

It was a young dwarf.

[Good grief, nothing good out of the boy who self-indulges too much with Silhouette Knight.]

While complaining with a bitter smile, his arm grabs his shoulder and makes a “gokigoki” sound *2.

For a certain reason, The Silver phoenix knight order has unique Silhouette Knights which makes it the most advanced unit in Fremmevir kingdom.

Each one of them are powerful machine but there was a need for man power to maintain their ability and many upgrades.

Inevitably, this resulted in increased work load of the calvary’s knight-smith group.

[**MASTER!!** About under-body part development of “Tzendrinble”, It is complete! We re-made it with brand new Crystal Tissue.]

[The king hardship. It has been a “Long journey” anyhow. we have had to go all out on the under-body part of Tzendrinble in particular]

Received reports from his subordinates that came rushing,

He.....

“David Hepuken” had a display of satisfaction.

He has the title of Silver phoenix knight smith corps captain.

A long part of the relationship since he took over the nick name of school days that been call as “MASTER”.

He was even familiar with it himself,

In fact, his position was nothing other than master of the smithy.

[Master-san. about upgrading and stowage of the silhouette knight, It is all finished.]

[Oh! Pigeon boy also worked hard. with this, the rough maintenance problems are finished.]

David looked at the young dwarven subordinate who had come.

He is “Batson Terumonen”

He is the unusual cavalry knight-smith who is more knowledgeable about Silhouette Gear than Silhouette Knights.

From then on, one after another, reports of completed maintenance arrive to the master.

From silhouette gear to silhouette knights,

Such as the large carriage truck drag Tzendrinble in addition,

The equipment that was owned by the Silver Phoenix Knight order really had a wide range of variety.

When combined with such scale, it’s quite a big task to get accustomed with the simultaneous maintenance.

[The final preparation have been done, now with this guy in tow, it will probably be a bustling journey. You guys too, just hop in already!]

Master who displays a pleased smile just skips the manifesto, the blacksmith group respond back by swinging up their arms.

He also said the same thing to the group of the steel knights that stood behind, while being able shine proudly somewhere.

Part 2 (Re-Edit from Darren Chaim suggestion)

On the other hand at that time,

Just what is the knight leader of silver phoenix knight order “Ernesti Echevarria” (Eru) doing?

He is not in Olvecius fort,

He was at home together with his childhood friend located at the street corner of Raihara school district.

[Ummn.... With me bring in this thing, the packing is almost done, right?]

Eru come from his room while holding armfuls of trunk case.

It can be see that both of his hands are holding enough to suffer,

Archid (Chid) was puzzled by that scenery.

[You can probably leave it at fort too, right? just how much you intend to bring.]

[Most of it are design notes of silhouette knight , tools for drawing and textbooks.]

[....Oh, yup, whatever, although I've feeling like this is going to end up as carefree journey.]

Even though it was their "Outing" now, Eru still going out with the usual tools as always , typical of Eru,

It can't be help that Chid felt a little amazed as expected.

[Oh dear, just wait a moment, Eru, you did not leave anything behind-ne? Is your silhouette knight working properly?]

To the ground floor, (his mansion should be at least 2 level building.)

The mother who dashed out to follow Eru with pitter-patter sounds is Celestina Echevarria (Tina).

From such a scenery, their action are shifted swiftly to the point of the just look-alike mother and son.

Chid who stood nearby was goofing lightly.

[Yes, of course-desu! because it will have to be in a perfect condition, we asked them to run a firmly maintenance right now. it get carried along with everyone, we're plan to join them later-desu.]

[If that is the case then i can be relieve-ne. Eru, this will made me feel lonely for a while , please take care yourself not to get hurt-ne. good luck on your job-ne.]

Tina lavishly embrace Eru softly while Eru nodded and hugged his mother strongly back too.

[Yes, It may be a little long journey, please take care yourself too-ne, dear mother. because I will bring you back a lots of "Souvenirs" after this, please look forward for my return.]

[Haha, a souvenir does not matter.....just working hard is good enough and come back safely.]

From behind Tina, the father, Mathias Echevarria appeared with a wry smile.

Whenever his son leisurely perpetrated occasionally ridiculous runaways, there was crisis that happened somewhere yet to be solve.

He may need more than the ability to get over it but the parent's worries do not care for that. (they care about Eru more than the crisis, that was i think.)

He patted Eru head roughly as Tina walked toward to the twins of brother and sister who are together with Eru.

[Ady-chan, Chid-kun too, be careful. both of you, please look after Eru-ne.]

[Yes, Tina-san! please leave your Eru to me. As leader assistant, I will work hard!]
(I guess everyone know whose line is this.)

[Although i think Eru will be okay no matter what happens, roger that]

“Adeltrud Olter” said it devoutly while move her hand from her waist to her chest,

Chid shrugged his shoulder.

After all, these twins always run rampaged together with Eru when he runaway, it can be say that it is predictable.



Let us depart!

[Then, let us depart! First of all, let us all head toward to the imperial city, to meet up with the knight order there-ne!]

Eru who holding a trunk case finished the farewell greetings and started running vigorously.

The twins also running in addition.

The parents who send them off by look at the back of the kids who running cheerfully,

They continued looking all the way until the kids disappeared from their sight.

Part 3 (Re-Edit from Darren Chaim , Ogre Rou suggestion)

West calendar, Year 1281.

The times before early summer, the time with days of pleasant weather.

At the imperial city of Fremmevir kingdoms “Kankanen”,

The man’s figure was proceeding at through the royal castle “Shreiber” corridor.

The man with a large solid build stature is rushing wildly.

The 2nd heir royal prince of Fremmevir kingdom, “Emurys Geijer Fremmevir”

Proceeding through the corridor, he kicked the door at the end of the path aggressively.

[Old man.....no, your majesty. I wish to go to “Kshyperuk kingdoms” (クシエペルカ) right now! Even without the pretext, you understand right?]

What lies ahead is the audience chamber with the king. the deepest, largest room, The king was already at the throne,

The king “Riothamus Harus Fremmevir ”,

He was displaying a lamenting expression instead of the uncaring attitude towards his son as it was the usual etiquette,

He raises the hand, mixed with feelings of resignation.

The people who stand around were surprised at being ordered to move out.

[....Good grief, I hear it coming. This idiot son of mine, your patience is unexpected short, although I already anticipated this once your voice could be heard (or it may be his foot step).

Can you tell me why you suddenly want to go to Kshyperuk kingdoms?]

He was displaying a lamenting expression instead of the uncaring attitude towards his son as was the usual etiquette,

Emurys had tears in his eyes while tightly clasping his fist. His actions befitted the appropriate person.

[That kind of thing, it's obvious! I don't how to say this, Father. Kshyperuk kingdoms is "our aunt's" (Martina) country, It is being invaded by other countries!!]

From the scene of the stressful 2nd prince who was clenching his fist,

King Riothamus grumbled with expression of resignation.

[Oh, because it precisely turned out to be what I thought, that's why I'm still not taking any action. Just where the hell you hear this sensitive news from?..... however, Emurys, none of requests have been arriving from her country. A reason is needed for heading to the battlefields.]

[Reason? Such a thing is not needed! Our aunt is on verge of danger right now! It is naturally for us to go help them, That should be enough isn't?]

Riothamus nodded quite naturally.

[I see, but to deploy military force. have you forgotten? Our country right now has limited numbers of silhouette knights. To keep the wide national border in check is what you need to do in order to protect the people, not head out to war in other countries.]

If only looking at just the wideness of the country,

Fremmevir kingdoms can be counted as a large country among the human nations.

The reason the country is being treated as a frontier nation, because its existence has infested with countless "Magical beast" all over the country.

In order to keep this country peaceful, it required many numbers of silhouette knights.

Before the undeniable fact, Emurys involuntarily closed his mouth, and frankly hated it,

He basically has a strong heart of chivalry.

To help his aunt, he will expose the danger to his people instead,

No one will forgive him for that.

That's why, he inevitably can't utter another word.

[Is that so? I'm got it..... Then, I will go to Kshyperuk kingdoms alone, It should be ok if only me goes there to help aunt!!]

Once again, he immediately made a obviously rebellious action,

Riothamus is holding his forehead.

A voice reached his son from behind.

(I'm believe that Emurys already turn his back on his fathers and on verge of leaving the audience chamber at this sentence being made.)

[Even if you go alone, just what the heck can one man can do?]

[....I don't know! But, Aunt took care me for a long times, to do nothing while thing are continuing like this, there is no way I can do that!]

Riothamus narrowed his eye with an absolute calm appearance,

[Then what about your name, "Emurys Geijer Fremmevir"? To go to country during the war with a that name, do you know what it means? It's obvious that you should know that with out saying, right?]

He suddenly stopped walking as he struck by a lightning.

[Abo...about that...]

[Until now, There were no one stupid like that, right? Certainly, this is about my younger sister's country. But more than that, what will happens if my own son goes there? It will be treat as a "War declaration from Fremmevir kingdoms".]

[Even you said that...Hmm! that's it, Kshyperuk kingdoms is a country on the west side of Aubigne moutains. For them to be invading over there, the next target after that might be our Fremmevir kingdoms! If you lend them a force before that happens....]

[That might be possible. But even if that was the case, are you still going there just to cause a bothersome enemy? the actions of the king will effect the country. You, the one who will succeed the throne someday. Emurys. The choice you make will be the country's

choice, That is the basis answer. Do you have resolve to involve the people of our country?]

Emurys falls into silence.

He can't say out even one word,

He squeezed his fist strongly enough to make his hand bleed at any moments,

His whole body is trembling.

He is about to say the whole of his feelings.

[So his majesty....father...., are you gonna forsake auntie....!?!]

[Such a thing will not happen.]

Emurys' reaction was delayed as he was taken aback by the light tone that ignored the flow from before.

[I can't allow you to go there and act alone. In order to achieve significant results, there is a need for the competent force. although it unthinkable for us to deploy a large force, I wonder if relying on only knight order soldiers would be a good thing....]

When Emurys's mind listened to his fathers grave words,

A certain knight order's names just came to his mind.

There are many knight orders in Fremmevir kingdoms,

But there was only one of "knight orders" suitable in this task,

He almost involuntarily uttered it's name,

At that moments,

The king was being notified about "Their" arrival.

[Your Majesty, sorry for being late, a trio of the company of the "Silver Phonenix Knights order" are here to establish an expedition preparation, Sir!]

Ernesti who appeared among the audience while he has been pulling Ady & Chid in tow, he gets reverently on his knee.

This unusual event make Emurys dumbfound,

Riothamus is just nonchalantly laughing on the back of his throne.

[Dissatisfied? Emurys. Their power are very well known right? The recent dismissed of Land Emperor (Behemoth) and Armor Queen of Beast (Queen Shellcast, クイ-ンシェルケ-ス), They are the strongest knight order that save our country from perils again & again, right?]

While showing a discouraged expression, Emurys scratch his head.

[I'm well aware about that..... Hey dad, in order to not let the country get involved in this mess, the commencing from now on must be not know by anyone right?]

[Um, exactly, therefore Emurys, you must avoid using the name “Fremmevir kingdoms” as much as possible, behave like you have no relationship with our country, also not give a just cause to anyone.]

As being exorcised, he finally break his lifeless posture.

And regained his favored pushy & forceful stance where his brute force alone is enough to startle others.

[....Father, This is kind of, is it not the quibblesome matter?]

[Wrong. This is something which said by the winners only. what happens? Emurys, what is more important is push through till the end.]

Riothamus cleared his throat by pinching it and changes his his expressions into a serious one.

[Our country now is more important than anything. “After” this, critical times may be noisier or harder, the obstacles will happen. We need to do everything to overcome it even though it will bring just a little peace or thing may be get rough(issue escalation). Also, please take care my idiot sons, Silver Phoenix Knights order.]

[It is my pleasure, our silver phoenix knights order will protect the life of royalty at the best of it ability-gozaimasu]

On the side, Emurys had no idea what he should said but, it definitely become troublesome for sure,

He started walking with Zuka-zuka sound (SFX ズカズカ).

[Yosh, it does't not matter! it really encouraging to be accompany with you guys. let's go, Silver Phoenix Knights order!!]

Chasing his back who begin to walk from behind,

The Kings word reach him.

[The war between a fellow country, it better for you to see it with you own eyes. the next era from now on will drastically change. In order to face it, Our opponent will not limit only a magical beast anymore, right?and, go help Martina!, that all I ask out of you.]

Emurys slightly looking back and vigorously nodded.

*

The greatest un-penetrate city of Fremmevir kingdoms,

The imperial city Kankanen surrounded by rigid wall.

Kankanen west gate,

It large enough to be enter or leave by silhouette knights,

The silver phoenix knights are gathered there with their fully equipped armament.

And the core of the troops,

The 3th squadrons of silver phoenix knights are made with the centaur knights
“Tzendrinble”.

Behind the large back of Tzendrinble are connect with the huge carriage “Dray”.

It display a high transportation capacity.

It is necessary capacity for a long distance march,

Which adjusted for sake of careful preparation.

On top of the wagon,

There are machine standing in knee stance.

Those silhouette knights was being treat as a luggage.

Most of it are the “Kardetolle”, the state of the art formality mass production machine.

It was the main force of the 1st & 2nd squadrons.

Of course,

There are not bring only just a silhouette knights,

There also great number of normal horse-drawn carriage that was load with repair parts which also treat as silhouette knights consumption,

The whole of them were up to a considerable scale.

[This really look like a large family-ne]

[Then what about going to help the friendly countries, how does it sound?. Because we're going there to fight. In other words, a lot of necessary thing need to be done, right?]

The 3rd squadron captain "Helvi Olberg" looking around at the surrounding with admiration.

The one who answer her is the 1st squadron captain "Edgar C Blanche".

Up until now,

The silver phoenix knights orders which having both high mobility and powerful forces, having running around many times as they were requested to be around.

However, all of it was still within their country,

Up until now, there is still not enough reason to deploy them for support on-site with full force, this will be their first time for expedition, there will be a lot of thing that they could gain from this journey.

[I don't know what's happening over there, but to me it look like something big. well, the grand-master and the other 2 seem to be present. Let's go for boarding preparation to move out soon.]

At that place, the 2nd squadron captain "Dietrich Cunitich" appeared.

He talked the 2 people and, his voice echoed around the and multiplied at group members.

The group members who had been care freely standing around until then begin to quickly move to their positions.

At the castle gate exist, Emurys who brought Eru with him appeared.

Looking at the fully equipped silver phoenix knights order,

He remember “The calamity of the shell beast” incident that was said to be the worst in recent years,

If the silver phoenix knights order did not show up to prevent the incidents.

It surely..... while he is sinking in his thinking process,

He already arrived at the exceptionally big carriage at the front row of the knights.

On the top of that special carriage which was towed with 2 Tzendrinble horse,

A silhouette knight that flashy reflected the shiny golden color bright as the light of day has been placed on it.

[...Yo “The gold lion”(Gordesleo). For auntie sake, you will display your full force when the times come, you know?]

Slip through beside of Emurys who looked up at the gold lion with deep motion, Eru look back behind the knights.

Without realizing, the line of sight of all members in that place are gathered on him.

[His royal highness. we await your command.]

[....Yosh,Yo-Silver phoenix knights order! Our group will proceed for the sake to helping auntie. also to stop the war, we ‘re going to kick the ass of the stupid country that caused incident!!]

From the description which is too rough in various ways, the group members collapse their posture as it is extremely disappointing to see.

Without care, Emurys clenches his fist, and continue.

[Our opponent this times is not a beast! Our ordeal may be difficult. But with the power of me and you guys, I believe that it will be achievable!!]

[Yesss sirr. Everyone, let’s enthusiastically participate in “War”, shall we?]

As if he had a screw loose, Eru who floated a happy smile with pleasure made a conclusion with ferocious words.

The group members roar,

The silhouette knights made a high-pitch aspirate intake & exhaust sound.

Thus, the silver phoenix knights order started moving to the midst of the raging storm in the west land.

It was the 1st times for Fremmevir kingdoms establish an expedition to the west.

Through all East and West, this year will be a history about large movement in Zetterlund Continent.

The time of the beginning has come.

*1 it write in オルヴェウス - Oruvu~eusu, please suggest alternative reading if you have proper a way to spell it.

*2 SFX, ゴキゴキ

Take your favorite novel wherever you go
novelepubs.xyz

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 29

Chapter 29 Begin of black storm

Part 1. (Re-editing with Ogre Rou suggestion)

The land was dyed in black. coldly, dull shine in full black tone, the heavy hard metallic black.

The one that turned it into the land of black is,

The giant knights wearing a whole body armor that clad in black– silhouette knights.

Its number are enough to be called an illusion that most likely fill up to the end of the land,

A giant silhouette knight troops had been gathered in this place and it was orderly lined up.

This place is the imperial capital city of “Jaroudeku Kingdom”, one of the major power country among the western countries.

A huge and magnificent royal palace is located in the center,

A vast space at hand is paved with wide array of cobblestones.

From the balcony that project to the front from the royal palace,

There are an insole area packed with this just black iron carpet

It is possible to overlook at every corner of the square since there were a few empty balconies.

There are 2 people, one was female.

They had been glaring at the innovated jet-black knight from earlier,

Soon, one young man is walking out in the front.

His age about mid 20 years old, a young man with a fearless impression.

In the conjunction that he walked to,

A giant, which lower its head hushed the beating of its heart.

Suppressed by intake & exhaust sound of “Ether Reactor”, a crystal tissue ringing almost not audible.

The surrounding are become quiet as it died out.

Gazing at the black knight that was solidified as a statue,

The young man nodded with satisfaction, then begin to speak in calm tone.

His voice had transmitted to every corner of this plaza, just what gimmick he used behind this trick?

[...To think that I will be able to witness this day, it struck my chest real hard, Gentleman of “Black Jaw Knights”, become a heroic!! Our country will conquer the west.]

He is “Kratos Sal Jaroudeku”, the eldest child of the king of Jaroudeku Kingdom, “Bartolomeu Bult Jaroudeku”

He stop his speech and slowly turn around.

His pair of beautiful eyes give the impression of cleverness,

He intent to release his loving gaze of power in the surrounding just now.

[As you gentleman knew that our country father, His majesty Bartolomeu had fallen in sickness. In the past when our fathers near death door (he mean the king in the past), our land was divided by the despicable rebel. Our biggest task for aim is always to regain it back. Just how much regret that our father has embraced? it was unbearable!, We must not abandon that aspiration and inherit it!]

Gasun! Gasun! , the black knights nailed a prey in their hand to the ground,

A prey that represent a substitute for the thing that he said.

While Kratos show his please at such a view, He continue the words.

[Once in the past, The land of the west was just one country, It was rule under the lone king. Gentlemen, all of you should already hear it before, the name of that country is “Father of the world”(Fil Zehnder Ar Baden). now, the remain of that country....is my country, Jaroudeku Kingdom, Kshypreuk Kingdom , The coalition country of Rokard, and The lone country of the elven race (Elven Flag)... all of these huge nations are the remains that divided]

His word gradually began to take on heat,

those part also begin sound like exaggerated.

It had been directed to all these black knights.

[“Father of the world” will oversee the people , even get rid of magical beast that pose a mighty matchless power, an exactly ideal country! However, due to flame of the harbor ambition that those foolish people conducted, devoured this utopia. We, Jaroudeku kingdom, who inherit the blood of power that once perish, The rightful successor. We have responsibility to dispel our fathers regret!]

The black phantom silhouette knights resume it beating in unison to match his brandishing arm.

Soldiers of black iron knight revives from their statue state and stamping their shield to their feet.

It was a chorus that respond to their lord’s word.

An unexpected disturbance sound echo in the square that paved with cobblestones, going roar to entire 4 direction thru the land.

Kratos shake the restrain arm again at the roar of black iron knight that fill with pressure.

Heard of steel, are immediately changing to one of tranquility.

[The time has come!]

Despite his murmur being quiet, it went soak in the heart of those who listen with hidden wonder and heat.

The knight runner manipulate the black iron armor one by one,

An intense pupils staring at the holo projector without realizing.



[That time has return to us, return to the great one again under our banner, the utopia country that was torn by a number of regrets!!]

The knights cry are all raised at once,

The roar of ether reactor that raised up it output has shake the air.

It is no longer important about who is saying what,

Since there are no one who able the grasp what is accurate.

Only some enthusiasm left in this place, a madness one that will engulf all everything.

[The Black jaw knight that our army pose will retake the rightful land! All soldier too! Prepare for move out!]

In place of his ill father, Kratos is about to take sovereign his country.

His word is already equal to Bartolomeu word, the king of Jaroudeku kingdom.

It does not take much time for the knight runners who fuel with the flame of conquest enter their silhouette knight, start walking and shaking the land immediately after that.

West calendar, at year 1281.

Jaroudeku kingdom made a declaration of war to the neighbor country, The coalition country of Rokard.

About a week later after that declaration,

Black Jaw knight order , Bronze Nail knight order, Copper Fang knight order,

The greatest war potential of Jaroudeku kingdom,

Which belong to the hexagonal knight order.

A total of 11 squadrons (about 600 machines) was mobilized,

They begin their march to the border all at once.

Here,

The greatest all-out war by the greatest country of the west,

It will be know and call in later time as “Western Grand Storm”

The curtain of battle has unfold.

Part 2. (Re-editing with Ogre Rou suggestion)

[...in the end, The coalition country of Rokard does not last more than 1 month....]

At capital city of Kshyperuk kingdom, “Dell Van Cool”

Among the royal castle tower in the middle of the city

Inside an exceptionally vast audience chamber.

A bitterness down figure is sitting on the throne that decorated with a delicate sculpture

The king of this country , “Akatsuki Varo Kshyperuk”

A copy of news that arrived from the west border this early morning, cause a deep wrinkle in his eyebrow.

It content, simply put that “the coalition country of Rokard has fallen”

Since the time of war declaration that Jaroudeku kingdom made,

Kshyperuk kingdom had been tracking it’s movement,

In the end, The result was settled much faster than they had anticipated.

[Rokard was a coalition of small country after all, even if they have a years worth of experience in defense warfare, but....there are clearly difference between the nation power compared to Jaroudeku]

[According to the news, Jaroudeku's way of battle is rely on pure brute force. It went ate the whole country from the front with out any strategy.]

[As expect from the major power country, So much of military force in Jaroudeku....]

King Akatsuki listening at the unanimously bandy princes whom gathered during the audience.

2 large renown nations among the west countries,

That is Jaroudeku kingdom and Kshyperuk kingdom

these 2 countries are not necessarily adjacent to each other,

In the mean time,

A small nation group called as Rokard nations was present.

They are sandwiched between the east and west of the 2 major powers,

Almost as it role was treated as a "Buffer Zone" between both countries

Theses countries had been living up like this for long time.

It was an effort that of those small country have,

There was no central government but they keep ask each other in the union to make decision,

Such as give an imitation to check and balance by using the military tension between the two nations,

Quite conducting an clever move.

[In other word, there was something in Jaroudeku. cause them increase force rapidly, burning again with ambition , Something.]

At muttered conclusion of king Akatsuki,

The princes look at each other.

They also think the same thing without disagree.

Further more,

The fact that puzzled them are not only just that.

Even after they defeated the Rokard Coalition,

There was no report that Jaroudeku Army stop their marching.

Rather,

The news report that they received are the opposite.

[...And after they end war with that small country group, They also continue after our country. no matter how much force that country possess, They are clearly pushing too much compared to the past.]

Put the coalition country aside,

Kshyperuk kingdom possess the same military strength as Jaroudeku kingdom, they should be a formidable enemy to them.

Even if Jaroudeku was a power house too,

It's not an opponent that have a power to continuing both war in succession.

It could be said that, the west possess a temporary stability so far.

In other word,

There was something occurred in Jaroudeku kingdom that cause the change to overturn this premise.

Kshyperuk kingdom is in a great peril if it does not know what is that "Something",

That suspicion had come in cross of king Akatsuki mind.

He did not show an timid appearance as the king,

He also had a feeling of crisis that can't be ignored.

[In any case, we can't turn a blind eye from this since now we were being challenged.]

The king murmur with full determination,

the nobles who gathered in this place also did not display their tension.

the complexion level of kshypreuk kingdom aristocracy are bad among the west countries.
(i think “bad” mean “possessive”)

Jaroudeku kingdom black knights will come pouring at their territory soon.

[Go assemble our troop in “Shiruda Toraida fort” ASAP. We are going to give those arrogant invader a lesson.]

“Shiruda Toraida Fort” – the defense line that protect Kshyperuk kingdom western border.

The citadel that ambush Jaroudeku army,

It existence guarantee an absolutely protection of Kshyperuk kingdom.

The nobles began to move hastily after they were told a basic solid measure by the king.

(Although, the presence of Shiruda Toraida fort is renown among the west and Jaroudeku should know that as well. up until now, It was a un-penetrated fortress no matter how much number it face. Are they have confidence to overcome it as well...?)

King Akatsuki only think up inside his mind while looking at the state of the nobles.

While having an obscure feeling,

His gaze go see through at a long wall that exist in far west.

Part 3. (Un-edited)

Jaroudeku army had destroyed coalition country of Rokard in the blink of an eye, as it continue marching into vicinity of Kshyperuk kingdom border.

Kshyperuk kingdom,
Western border line,
near coalition country of Rokard border.

A smooth terrain that covered all of the area are called, Bastor plain.

With less obstacle, it is really an unsuitable terrain to engage a defense formation against a large army but,

Kshyperuk kingdom had built a long protective great wall that suitable to called a work of power nation.

One of this large great wall is called “Shiruda Yukushia”, one of the wall that Shiruda Todaira fort posses,

It posses a solid wall with a height of several times of silhouette knight,

Behind it, the fortified camp spread around the area

The defense capabilities are boost greatly when combine them together,

It was no an exaggerated to say it won't fall even face attack of 1000 silhouette knights.

Before this large great wall of impregnable stronghold that notified the world about the might of Kshyperuk kingdom,

Jaroudeku military deployed silhouette knights in large formation,

A all-out attack formation from the front.

At the center position of Jaroudeku troops that blacken the plain,

There are people speaking while their look at the wall of long stone that block the vision.

[As expected, this is really one of world renown fort, it is impregnable strong fortress of the enemy.]

[Hmph, a sign of coward, after all, all they do is just merely hole up themselves behind it.]

There are a person with similar appearance to the 1st prince of Jaroudeku, Kratos. however, he look slightly childishness when compared to Kratos.

A haughtiness that impossible to hide was floating around him.

His name is “Cristobal Hasslo Jaroudeku”,

As it is a younger brother name of Kratos,

the 2nd prince of Jaroudeku kingdom.

He was assigned as the general of this Jaroudeku kingdom expeditionary force.

The name of middle-aged man who had a hefty physique which stand beside him is “Dorotheeo Mardones”.

He was Cristobal staff who does not belong to the knights order.

Among the heavy tension that radiated between both army that stand ready to engage each other,

2 persons really had a carefree small talk while their attention stick on the best wall fortress.

From their position,

Kshyperuk army which build a defensive position in front of their best wall fortress can be seen.

But no matter how robust wall fortress is,

Any collision from attack would allow a crack to happen, it will remain exposed as a opening to attack.

Kshyperuk army too, will not focus their force to fortify at one place.

Overlooking at the guarded Kshyperuk army that did not come out to repel the Jaroudeku army,

Cristobal floating a violent smile like a predator that ready to pounce at it prey, just like a hunting game.

[Did Kshyperuk had taken a forward defense? just like we want them to do, Your highness]

[Such a old tactic, it's sad but it still around. well then, it is good for us to keep participate in this glare match?.... although it unpleasant but it seem that some of us begin to flinch. first of all, the enemy is human, let go war!]

[My pleasure!]

His decision was relayed on the next day.

Together with the sun rises, Jaroudeku army began to march.

Matching the trumpet sound that echo thru battlefield,

The array of black iron knight begin to move forward.

Forming number of columns, the formation of Jaroudeku army press forward.

That is exactly, just like an illusion of black wall that rushing to swallow it prey, it given pressure to Kshyperuk soldiers.

[Is that...Jaroudeku new type silhouette knight?... how should i say...it's huge...]

The knight runners who sitting in the cockpit of Kshyperuk Mass production silhouette knight "Leswant", forget their breath at the majesty of Jaroudeku army that approach before their eyes.

A huge knight, and it is not a metaphor,

The coordination of Jaroudeku military state of the art silhouette knight "Tyrantor",

It's huge compare to their Leswant in 1 on 1.

Tyrantor posses a formidable heavy armor and incredible large output power packed in it body.

Rather than say it's fatty, it's over bursting in with power instead.

When Kshyperuk army witness the marching Jaroudeku army, they immediately begin to return fire.

A long-distance attack from Shiruda Yukushia wall.

A rain of stone perform by stone throwing had pour over the Jaroudeku army.

It is not funny if get hit by it, even Leswant shield would be crush.

However, Tyrantor just only held up it's shield and deal with stone very easy.

Just how much power that new machine of Jaroudeku army have?

Beside their stoning attack do not have effect, Kshyperuk army still learn another horror fact.

The press forward Jaroudeku army had reach their silhouette arms firing range.

The powerful bullet from both side begin to rewrite the terrain.

In the mean time, Tyrantor troops was approaching to the verge position of Kshyperuk army.

If it this close, they could hit their ally.

Stone throwing can't be use any longer.

Tyrantor troops threw their shield and rush into close combat.

They just simple walk across the defensive position that built before the fort,
The sound of sword crossing from both army echo thru that place.

[W, what is this guy?... so hard! my weapon is not getting through!?]

[Damn it!, my sword, my sword being bounce back...kuh!?]

Without require much of times, it became a one-side battle than expect.

Tyrantor had demonstrate it's invincible fighting capability.

Tyrantor tough and curve armor easily bounce back Leswant sword attack,

It much be heavy weight to be able to wield a matchless power like that,

It pulverize Leswant with a single blow in reverse.

Beside it nearing attack in dense column formation that coming,

Kshyperuk army was beating helplessly and scattered.

More than king Akatsuki feared,

Jaroudeku army and it's new machine are powerful.

In the past,

The performance of silhouette knight that Jaroudeku army and Kshyperuk army used are not dramatic different.

Judging from the past,

There probably was a exceptionally innovation that cause a revolution inside Jaroudeku.

Even he learn it by now,

It won't comfort Kshyperuk soldiers who are being crushed right now.

[Damn, Those Jaroudeku, this match already go their way....!]

[There are no point for us to continue held this position...retreat! retreat back to Shiruda Todairo fort to defense it!!]

After quite a time pass,

Bastor plain had become a barren land which was left behind with red flame by the black iron knight.

Average number of Leswant wreckage visibly, only a few wreck belong to black iron knight.

At Kshyperuk army which suffered one side damage and pain,

There was no other choice for them beside retreat.

Fortunately, the boasting Tyrantor of Jaroudeku army, lacked mobility heavily due to their heavy armor that cost a of lot of large output power.

It can't chase the retreat Kshyperuk army properly,

They barely make a good escape from Jaroudeku heavy weight troops which seem to be possible.

While watching enemy troops fill the plain, the remaining soldiers within the absolute wall which Kshyperuk boast a non-successful invasion were in despair and anxiety.

Jaroudeku new machine boast overwhelming power.

With the black tsunami that flood before them, no matter how much strong of impregnable fort, it will not last forever.

This is their 1st time, to carrying a doubtful feeling in their chest about non-succession invasion fortress legacy.

The messenger horse was immediately dispatch from the fort to imperial city,

The hope of soldiers in the fort were carrying along with it.

While advancing at foothill of the fort, Jaroudeku army is neither panic and proceed at it slowly.

They prepare besieging the fort before them.

Compare to Kshyperuk army that already lose confidence, the appearance are too indifferently, it has not even display eeriness.

They did not show enthusiasm to hunt down the enemy nor lacked the focus before their prey.

Just only him,

Cristobal broad his smile in his command stronghold at Jaroudeku force that exist in the rear.

[Ku Ha Ha Ha! That's trilling, just now, our guys are like eating a cake but time sure flying!]

[It would be of course, You putting into word very well, Your highness. as expected of powerful Black Jaw Knights, this is surely cause damage to the enemy wall]

[That seem so, Shall I show you the best attack "Plan"? We will combine our force and appear all together at same time. it will surely exposed their key point.]

At Cristobal who imply the sinister prophecy to the future of Kshyperuk kingdom,

Dorotheeo returning the smile but it was only a blurring wry smile.

Part 4. (Re-editing with Ren Lazkrovich suggestion)

By the earlier horse that dispatch to imperial city with rushing speed,

The air of tension wrapped around Kshyperuk royal castle again.

[Jaroudeku war potential is far too powerful when compared to the past, We are exhausted and the enemy still... if this goes on, Shiruda Yukushia will fall sooner or later...!]

The expression shown on the faces of Kshyperuk's leaders also become pale, rubbing their head with bitter look before the messenger soldier who on the ground.

The mood also became gloomy at the bad premonition of King Akatsuki which has become a reality,

On the surface, an expression of calmness but only an act.

[So that's why Jaroudeku is....really confident up until now..., their silhouette knight..., Is it really that strong?]

[It's truly a monster with frightening thick armor, Sir! It's impossible to win from clashing head on with them...also we were crushed by their vast numbers in basic tactic formation, we can't find their weakness.]

The king released a heavy sigh, sinking deeply into his throne.

Their impregnable fortress was hailed to be an indestructible barrier.

They still have the remains of 3 layered fortress, “Shiruda Kakushira fort” (2nd) and “Shiruda Korumeda fort” (3rd),

But much can't be expected of the defensive capability of each fortress.

It is troublesome because they've mistaken the enemy's strength in the front.

Even taking into account the existence of fortress,

Judging from the large gap in military power of the both sides.

There was only one measure that can be taken in that situation.

[Your majesty, I urge you we should hurry up and gather our army at sector 15 in the West!]

At the remark of the nobles who ruled Kshyperuk's territory in western region,

King Akatsuki nodded with a difficult face,

Gathering such a number, a simple method but a reliable one.

Especially their Leswant, silhouette knight of Kshyperuk army.

Overwhelmingly inferior to the Tyrantor of Jaroudeku army.

So they must gather a great number of them, this will not be an easy feat.

Most of Jaroudeku's army is comprised of the Tyrantor model,

If it team up with first rate heavy infantry squadrons,

Toppling it from the front is impossible, they've already prove that themselves.

Now they need to pick them individually, including lure it into the fortified area that spread behind the strongest shield fortress.

Attempt to divide enemy force to exploit a weakness which they do not know even if it exist or not?

Not to mention, how large the scale they need to prepare for this kind of sacrifice.

Although their discussion lasted longer than usual, in the end, there were no more plans than the existing one coming out.

The conference ended but there remained heavy tension in the air,

King Akatsuki went back to his private chamber.

From the view of the public, he was known as the mild-mannered person,

But it couldn't be said in this case this time.

He took off the mask of composure as soon as he was alone, slamming his fist heavily on the desk.

[So long time for peace, even though this country facing it's time of prosperity...there's no way that I will allow it to end like this no matter how much this national crisis we're undergoing.]

Although Jaroudeku kingdom revealed such disturbing signs for a long time,

This "10 years" was dramatic stand out.

Now, that you think about it.

That because, It has always been preparations for this terrible invasion.

He just did not see through it,

He won't deny that he was probably drowning as king in this time of peace.

[But I will definitely end this for sure. for "That girl" inheriting this fight is...!]

Akatsuki face had firmly renewed with determination.

Although it is the king's personal living chamber, he should not be expecting anyone,

There was another person who called out to him.

[Father....?]

King Akatsuki looked back at the origin of voice,

There was a beautiful maiden there, the person's figure with blooming aura.

This person identity is the only daughter of king Akatsuki.

The first heir to the throne, "Eleonora Miranda Kshyperuk".

Although she had a cloudy melancholic look, she still came to stop by and be at her father's

side.

[Father , I've heard from people around, Jaroudeku has strengthend their offensive power, when it shaken the safety of the Western Border...]

[Eleonora, you need not worry about it. We have the invincible Shiruda Todaira fort, one of the 3 layer forts. and it's power rival against the prince of western province. It not a big deal. We shall repel those invaders out before you know it!]

The king's expression which was steeply distorted until earlier, changed back into his usual mild expression in the blink of an eye.

Rather than keeping the dignity of the king, he took the fatherly behavior to reassure his daughter who was in the anxious state.

Eleonora has become 16 years old this year.

The majority of the times that she grow up was peaceful with discretion in the air, growing up as the princess who held a gentle personality.

It is natural to think that he does not want her to deal with the rough staff, after all, she was the only daughter. A very important one as a matter of fact.

King Akatsuki said such words with intent to prevent her from getting anxious.

[....Yes, father. I am quite relieved to hear that.]

It's hardly known that Eleonora would doubt her father's word or not,

She then regained herself and upon her face shown a soft smile like sunlight of spring time,

The king leaked a light murmur while he saw his daughter off whom walk away from behind.

[..right, every thing is gonna be fine. I will show you for sure that this war will end on my watch. You will not bear this burden, absolutely not!]

Part 5. (un-edited)

The standoff of both armies that sandwich Shiruda Yukushia wall showing a sign of prolong unexpectedly.

It was Jaroudeku army that scattering Kshyperuk army back with the overwhelming force,

The chance of the proud Shiruda Yukushia heavy wall being capture still low for now.

But If they advance with the power of Tyrantor, it probably possible to destroy the wall.

After all, Kshyperuk did not put their force in front of wall in the first place.

There is no one to protect the wall

Despite their movement were slow, Jaroudeku forces had show the mysterious movement,

No doubt that this was a good chance for Kshyperuk army which inferior in strength.

They begun to mobilize force at Shiruda Yukushia wall peripheral which they gathered number from each domestic place urgently.

Approximately one month has passed since the fighting near the border began.

The invasion of Jaroudeku army begin started 2 months ago. (they waste 1 month on Rokard)

So far, the attack by Jaroudeku army was sure slow but they ensure the damage on the best wall fortress,

The crack in wall that Kshyperuk boast proudly already visible.

It would be not an exaggerated to said that wall may be collapse sooner or later.

Behind the wall, there are a large force of Kshyperuk army which they finished their formation,

It was a sigh of relief that they able to well-equipped their war potential before the destruction of the wall happen.

This is surely inevitably,

A sign of battle.

Both armies had deploy their silhouette knight at both sides of the wall, the number of silhouette knights combine together in this deployment exceed 1000 units,

This is a rare development into a full scale combat when you look at history of the west.

In the next event of the wall,

The large force are present together as it was nature,

Also Jaroudeku army has showing a vulnerable spot in their formation.

While what Cristobal was waiting for has come,

Under his instruction.

He will dictate the whereabouts in this fight, to carry on their secret plot.

[It is suitable time, go call “Steel Wing Knights” , kukuh, I’m too will head out as well.
when think about people, let put the end to their misery breath.]

[Yes sir! Immediately!]

Right,

Jaroudeku army possess the very powerful forces, also the large army of Kshyperuk
military to face it.

This is what they had been waiting for, this battle.

When Kshyperuk army mobilize their excess force, it can be said that their silhouette
knight performance are inferior.

It was that of pitch dark night, a lot of clouds blocking the moonlight.

While the “Recruit vessel” of Jaroudeku has start the invasion with the cover of darkness.

Kshyperuk army never notice the final that coming.

Part 6. (Edited by Zerak suggestion)

Dell Van Cool

Capital city of Kshyperuk kingdom

Far away from the western border, this city is positioned at the center of the Kshyperuk
kingdom.

Dell Van Cool is one of the most prosper and large cities among the western countries

Thank to peace that lasted a long time, Its culture develop greatly.

Because of this the national power of country grew, to became one of the more powerful
countries.

As its buildings line up with the structure of trading company,

But now, It lost its liveliness.

The city is covered by thick dark cloud of anxiety.

The threat of Jaroudeku army which shook the border security has affected this capital city in various ways.

With the war situation that change for the worse, the people on the streets were filled with lackluster expressions.

That day, the soldiers who patrol above the wall that surrounds the imperial city, remembered the sense of panic because of the strange stillness in the darkness night.

Only sound of flickering flames from torches could be heard.

Suddenly, he felt something moving towards him as he stopped his foot.

That night dark clouds covered the moonlight so it was hard to see if there was anything moving, so after sometime he gave up looking.

The invasion by Jaroudeku had steep up his anxiety. he scolding himself for getting paranoid, and went back to patrolling.

However, his intuition was not a mistaken.

From somewhere, the sounds of fabric fluttering in the wind gusts could be heard. the unnatural sound was mix with the sound of strong wind,

On the wall a high distance from the ground, he felt an intense discomfort from it.

Then, the fact that “**There was no wind at that time**” echoed through his consciousness, and though about the sound that reach his ear earlier?

Just where did the sound of fluttering cloths come from?

At that moment, a chill ran down his spine.

He took out a horn from the storage, overlooking the surroundings, with a great determination, he keep looking in order to not miss anything even faint movement.

Soon, he meet a tremendous anomaly.

Something bustling and twirling around in his line of sight,

Finally, a solidified figure emerge in the air.

coincidentally at that exact moment the clouds split open as if a giant hand split them open making way for the giant moon to shine its light on the surroundings. accidental,

To show a huge black shadow that advance at the center of his vision.

The soldier was at a loss for words as his mouth opened in shock, losing self-control he drop his horn.

First, he doubted his eyes, then suspect his sanity.

The huge shadow that advanced through sky that brought along the swirling wind, was something that could not be described with only the word “Ship”.

It was a supreme abnormality that defied his common sense.

“Ship” is a vehicle that travel on the water, not soar through the sky.

In the first place, an object that huge would be not able to fly.

It's black figure was not because it was covered with shadow under the moonlight, but it was painted with black color which make it blend in the dark night.

If you examine it carefully, a huge black color part that spread to left and right of its mast “Sail” with that reasoning, he able to notice it only after it was this close.

Then while his mind still absent at such a scene, the flying black ship approached with accelerated sailing speed.

More unnatural logic, there was no wind on that night but the sail of the ship appeared to be blown with strong wing.

No longer, the shape of ship is not longer hidden anymore as it was clearly visible at this distance.

In the brink of falling into panic, none of this made sense to the soldiers. he trembled to the point of his teeth making rattling noises as they struck each other.

He blow up a scream like war cry into the horn that had fallen earlier.

[It's..... In..... Intruders!.....No,A ship! A black ship is coming from the sky!!]

While the soldiers ran away he tangled his feet.

The flying ship flew beyond the wall of the imperial city.

One flying ship?

Wrong.

2 ships,

3 ships.....the soldiers gazed at what followed the black ship that he found, it was followed by similar ships.

It would be 10 ships in totals, It was a big fleet.

At the sight of flying ships appearing in the sky one after another, despair and havoc has spread among all who could see it.

No one believe in its presence,

They were all lost a words after seeing it for real.

Before long, once they notice the flag of Jaroudeku kingdom that was fluttering on top of the soaring ship.

They regained their words in form of screams.

This is the true identity of “Steel wing knights”, the Jaroudeku kingdom’s trump card.

This is the first time that a flying ship was put to use in practical way in this world—“Levitate Ship” (Sky Airship) was constructed by, A irregular knight orders.

These flying sky ships, have a strange shape such as a tipped ship going on the water.

It has an aligned sail at both left and right side, and proceed there by the wind.

A sky airship with top rounded—a portion of its bottom similar to water vessel part—“Ship bridge” which served as the ship’s commander room is visibly stick out.

Some area has the floor plan cluttered, exposed its various equipment.

There is one step higher seat laid at the center of the bridge.

Originally, it should be the seat for “Captain”.

But now, the an unexpected person sat on it.

That person is Cristobal, the 2nd prince of Jaroudeku kingdom who should be on the mission to capture Shiruda Yukushia (Great Shield Fortress) wall at the border in the far west at the moment.

[Fools of Kshyperuk, they are all running in a hurry like how pig flee from the butcher!]

[Because no one know the existence of flying ships, would such a thing....What?Umu... Your Royal Highness, report from the vanguard ship. More search light in the town has been activated!, they probably prepare to intercept us.]

[Futile struggle! , because it already checkmate for them. Yosh, Let's begin. reduce ship speed!]

The airship soldiers opened the metal lids that line up along the wall in response to Cristobal's command.

They appear to start shouting instruction command towards something that look like a tube.

It is a mechanism that sends a notification to the various place through ship's hull,

The speaking tube was equipped around the ship to relay command from the bridge.

[Figure Head, commence head wind behavior to bow engine, loosen speed degrees, fold the sail, get ready to be attack from the ground.]

[Figure Head roger that, bow engine, start the head wind behavior.]

The scene of knights who extending to shove the side hull from the bow to half-length of the airship.

Figure Head part are molding heavily.

If you look it well, it turn wriggling at the neck part, partial of it can be call a horseman.

It is not a simple statue, what installed on that is the half body of silhouette knight.

It operated the silhouette arms that connected to both of its hand and,

The wind that happen to be around the airship just changing its direction.

The identity of wind sound that take place on the calm night, was due to this silhouette arms.

The airship was gliding through the air while gradually dropping its speed,

It was approaching the imperial city while easily flying above the internal wall.

Chaotic befall the imperial guards who protected the royal palace located at the center of imperial city.

This probably natural, since no one there know how to deal with the flying airships.

They act accordance with the night attack situation while they still don't know how to deal with it.

In other word, they just simply put up more bonfires.

They not aware that, by doing so make their royal castle more easy to notice from the sky.

Cristobal in the bridge laughed all the way from his belly at the stupidity of enemy's actions.

He did not end up only laughing but also un-sheath his sword that attach to his waist nad rise up from the captain seat.

[I hereby declare to all gentleman of steel wing knights! tonight, the capital of these fools shall fall!! All hands fire!]

Under his command, the soldiers began to move in unison, contact more soldiers via speaking tube and shouting the command to rapid fire.

They start moving in unison to various places in the airship.

[Messenger! messenger! begin to drop the Tyrantor, prepare equipment at each drop! knight runner get in the cockpit!]

[Beginning the bombing procedure, start the airflow of inner "Etheric Levitate" (Elemental floating device)!]

The huge equipment is equipped in the center of ship hull.

This is what make the airship able float in the sky, it could be say that Etheric Levitate is the heart of the airship.

There are a lot of soldiers in the surrounding area.

The puppet lever are all line up in large quantities,

They carried out the operation while glare at that grand instrument.

The Etheric Leviate may be generating powerful output but, it is also a delicate instrument.

If it stop working right now,

All of them would fall along with the ship to their deaths.

So problems must be dealt with as quickly as possible.

While wiping the sweat that bled from their hands,

These engineer soldiers have achieved their objective.

[Confirm boarding of all knight runners, all Tyrantor are ready to go. begin dropping sequence.]

[Reduce speed by 5, 21, maintain the ship in stable condition, dropping speed reach!]

Cristobal smile deeply, while he listen the the voice of soldiers who received weapons one after another.

Before long, he received a final report that he waiting for.

[Siding report! we are at a distance of 30 from the ground, dropping distance reached! no attack from the ground.]

[Good, let honor belong to the 1st hand, open the bottom, Steel wing knights, go conquer it!!]

The flat armor plate that cover the bottom section is opening up, showing a hole at the bottom of the ship.

The silhouette knights which are pulled and connected by chains causing the rasping sound of Gyari-Gyari were dropped out from there immediately.

Just how robust are those silhouette knight?

In order to drop from the sky and escaped the destruction.

They drop by advance hull for that purpose. (just stick out their fatty belly to absorb the shock.)

They drop down to the partway distance and deceleration by hanging with a crane thru chain that binds them.

Once the Tyrantor reach a sufficient distance that allows it to reach the ground safely, it

removes the chain.

They land on the ground and cause a cloud of dust.

This strategy move of Steel wing knights still have load capacity problems.

Each airship can take an irregular organize 11 squadrons (6 machines)

Nonetheless, it still smaller than the army of border.

Now, 60 machines of giant black knights are raiding on the imperial city of Kshyperuk.

It is the 1st in the history, that airborne drop operations was used by a flying airship

By the surprise attack that far from the common sense, the capital on Kshyperuk kingdom was exposed and defenseless.

Part 7. (Edited by Zerak suggestion)

Not too long after Jaroudeku's Steel wing knights begin the raid.

The great imperial city Dell Van Cool which is famed for being a leading leading city in west, is covered in flames, fire rose up from many places in the residential area, seemed as though it was real hell.

The giant iron knights which appeared on the imperial city were walking as the building of brick-line were unable to stop them.

Although a number of nearby guard had been placed close enough to be in the vicinity of imperial city because of its patron,

There no way for them to expect direct raid from the sky.

For that reason, the city guards silhouette knights who rushed quickly to aid them, did not expected the battle to be with a battalion scale of 60 machines.

[Damn it all, what a freaking thick armor! It's too hard for Leswant's attack!!]

They trembled before the heavy weight jet-black armor that the Tyrantor possess, even Leswant with its shield up was just blow away.

Even they heard the border situation, this was still far beyond their expectations.

It is an overwhelming force.

Almost like "It was made from an another level fundamentally"

The difference between Tyrantor and their Leswant are far too grave.

Even so, The city guards did not give up.

They still launched an attack to siege the enemy—Tyrantor which still less in numbers, however, the difference between their power has compensated for the lack in numbers.

While they are trying to narrow down the siege, a suspicious shadow different from the Tyrantor was running through the rooftops of the buildings.

That shadows wielding a sharp claws that extending from the tip of its arm and attacked the Leswant from overhead position.

Judge from its size, that shadow must be a silhouette knight.

But that silhouette figure is too odd rather than have a human wearing armor shape, it has a strangely elongated stature and long distort arm instead.

[What... is this guy?? It this one also Jaroudeku's silhouette knight!?!]

Not too long after confusion, more surprises rose together from shadow one after another.

When Leswant squad begin to counter-attack it, the shadow just took lightly evasive maneuvers as it ridiculed them.

It's really posses a light weight to the extreme.

The moment it stepped on the Leswant,

The arm of that shadow grow tremendous "extending".

At that tip lie a sharp claws.

It take it upon the surprised Leswant.

Shortly after it drilled into Leswant belly, only dead silence remain.

[Damn, ... these bastards! how dare!]

The rage Leswant rushing toward the shadow who stabled and struck its claws through their teammate in front of them,

The shadow is noting but light weight, with the "Weight" was putting upon its arm preventing its movement.

It should be not able to escape in this situation.

However, another the shadow appeared to intercept the Leswant imminent slash.

It had a smooth slim appearance also black color as the earlier shadow.

The knight runner of Leswant just opened his mouth as he shouted a war cry and shift his sword to the new shadow.

A slash fraught with anger did not land successful upon the shadow as it “(the slashing)” was reflected

In return, the new shadow pierced through whole body of vigorously Leswant with its momentum.

Crushed the crystal tissue throughout it's body.

Lestwant stopped its movement like a puppet with it's strings cut.

[Fuh, This is my kindned service, you know?] (said the new shadow knight runner, I'm presume it.)

Then, Leswant numbers began to reduce to the point that they could no longer hold the encircle formation.

Eventually, the Tyrantor troops also join the fray to counterattack the Leswant, as knights of kshyperuk turned into their victims.

Odds are against the Leswant troops.

After they are crushed one by one, the shadows dissolve into darkness again.

[With this serious blow, It's over for the Kshyperuk kingdom. so, you guys just became renown through defense at best after all]

At the command that came from slim silhouette knight which looked like a commander unit,

The shadows began to move by returning a small nod in response.

They are looking for the next prey, running on the top roof with lightness.

The black army multiplying the darkness of night,

It's destination—gradually changed to the center of the city—the royal palace.

Part 8. (Edited by Zerak suggestion)

A faint vibrations began transmit to the royal throne chamber where king Akatsuki was.

A sign that the battlefield escalated and closing fast to their position.

Originally he wondered when he incessantly heard the emergency broadcast from the earlier, just where and what is going on?

No one in that place know the whole picture.

No, it probably could be said that there was no place in the imperial city that escape the battles.

Kshyperuk's army tried to mobilize while they were unable grasp the situation.

As a result, they foolishly scattered their numbers.

Result as they were trampled to death by small numbers of Jaroudeku elite knights which overrun them.

The worst outcome was crossing king Akatsuki's mind.

Even his shadow displayed a dreadful expression.

While in bad complexion a soldier came with a new report.

[Large flying ship approaching.]

This definitely meant that the enemy was fully intent on settling the score.

[So this is the farthest we go.....]

The king drown out by the surroundings that were in hustle and bustle while momentarily showing a tired look.

Fortunately, no one saw that, and he was grateful that no one did.

He rose up.

[Gentleman, it seem that we must make the final decision now.]

This place is the imperial city, to abandon this place would mean not only just destruction of the country but also nothing left behind too.

Hence, they had choose to fight to the last man.

Most battles in urban areas indicated that Kshyperuk were on the verge of being defeated, the siege began to rapidly narrow down to their position.

Although they still can mount a last stand at the royal palace, that must be in time of emergency only since the royal palace itself doesn't possess much a defense capability.

That's why the walls surrounding of the imperial city were erected,

However, it may not end up as a futile struggle, who knows?

"Kshyperuk kingdom was going to be defeated" – that feeling not just crushed the king Akatsuki's heart, he just don't want to admit it was possible.

But he still had one thing that must be done.

He walked quietly and stood in front of his daughter who was full of anxiety, Eleonora.

He speak the words, He was very calm even he was surprise at this fact.

[The royal palace is already surrounded. soon, everyone in the royal family will fall in the hand of the enemy. before that happen, you must escape by using the hidden passage.]

[Fa....Father, are you coming too?]

[I'm...as the king of Kshyperuk, I still have one last duty that must be done.]

At that moment, Eleonora eyes burst into tears.

The daughter who was told with a strict tone severely different from the usual, ignored all modesty a royal princess should have and dove into her father's breast.

[Things like that.....thing like that are meaningless Father! please escape together with me!! there is still time...]

[I can't do that, Eleonora]

King Akatsuki moved back slowly from Eleonora, he looked at her from the front. only a gentle voice came out, to console her.

[If the king flees before anyone, he would be not able to face the knights who fought to their death in his place while the "King's Cavalry" (King personal silhouette knight) was still untouched, it would be a shame, right?]

[But.....]

She couldn't utter a single word.

After king Akatsuki hugged Eleonora quietly without any inhibition, his line of sight shifted to the person who was standing beside her.

[Although it is a painful role, I leave it to you, "Martina"]

[Of course, I will protect princess Eleonora even at cost of my life.]

"Martina Ortho Kshyperuk", daughter of Ambrosius the king of Fremmevir, who married to king Akatsuki's brother, "Fernando Nebaresu Kshyperuk", answered with powerfully nod.

She called another girl who also present in that place.

[Isadora, do as we discussed before.]

[Yes, Mother, come on, Eleonora, let's hurry, we don't have much time....]

"Isadora Adria Kshyperuk", Martina's daughter is forcefully pulling the still cranky Eleonora.

Eleonora was crying out loud in resist while she was dragged by Isadora's hand.

At king Akatsuki facial expression filled with forego, it is a some sort of regretful feeling.

[...forgive me, Martina, I bet it must be hard for you too.]

[Such a thing....not at all....,Your Majesty. Although this is the word of Eleonora, but I think it is all right if Your Majesty escaped together her. It is better that way. to go that far for such a thing like King cavalry, after all it is just a silhouette knight, a relic from the past, it not worth anything when compared to.....]

[You are right, Even so, Martina, did you see the enemy figure? that flying ship is unprecedented stuff. to be able to fly in the sky like that is really troublesome]

King Akatsuki turn his line of sight to the dark night from the window.

He glare at a black flying airship that caused a flames burning through the city.

There is one ship that's larger than the other, that one also was clad in black with a "Flag" fluttering on it.

With the different characteristic than the others, it must be Jaroudeku's flagship .

[...If the royal family remain behind in the palace, even one person, those Jaroudeku may

be using that ship to start searching immediately. it observed us from the sky after all, and it will be easy since our hiding places were limited, that's why the king needed to remain in this place, to focus their attention here, to draw them in]

[...Brother in law.] (in fact, She call him "Ani")

Martina looked at the strangely quiet appearance of king Akatsuki who had resolved to die here.

[In the end, I'm just helplessly left the burden to that girl... I'm wonder, maybe I am not a good father, maybe not a good king either.]

[Such a thing is....]

[After the death of my wife, may be I pampered her too much raising her up as a child. she can't handle harsh things, I don't know how far I can go in this wartime?... Martina, would you please support her as I would no longer be there for her?]

[Definitely, you have my word, I will eventually chase away the invaders together with that child]

[Please do that, now it looks like we can't afford to have this long talk anymore...I really want to tell, to ask from brother (Fernando) too.] (The novel did not tell but I'm suspect that Fernando already pass away long time ago and Martina is widow, maybe....)

Martina chewed her lips strongly for a moment, and immediately bowed with a correct attitude and chasing after her daughter in a hurry.

Only one person remained in the throne room.

King Akatsuki noticed that the flying airship became closer.

He floated a colorless smile.

[To be able to make it this far, these hated enemies surely have an impressive skill, but I won't go down that easily....]

Then, the king issued his last royal decree.

[Prepare my king cavalry! To the battle!]

Part 9. (Edited by Zerak suggestion)

Since the flying airship invasion,

The sound of battle was no longer audible in imperial city. It regained the tranquility of the imperceptible night.

Most of the Kshyperuk army were already eliminated,

The existence of those who would fight in the imperial city were no more.

The knights in black armor were surrounding the royal palace as they approached the center of the city.

The flying airships also join the siege by surrounding it from the sky.

Then,

The main gate of royal palace open up widely.

There appear to be a column of silhouette knight almost like when a ceremony took place.

It is a Leswant clad with a lot of ornaments, such as decorative cloth.

The decorations hinted that these machines were the royal guards stationed at the royal palace.

They had no choice but to come out,

This is shown how much Kshyperuk army were cornered.

However in line of vision of the Jaroudeku army they ignored the Leswant and focus at the center of there ranks,

There was an exceptionally gorgeous silhouette knight, the silhouette knight of the Kshyperuk king “Karutoga Oru Kshyeru”, with the flame of regret in its eyes.

It may be hard to grasp its design in the dark night for the ground troops.

But in this situation, it became a perfect target to get the attention for the flying airship in the sky.

While the Leswant troops that did not hide there tension, Karutoga Oru Kshyeru—which king Akatsuki was riding stood quietly and lookeed up at the huge airships in the sky.

[King Bartolomeu...In recent year, I heard that he fell on sick bed, So whoever aboard this airship can't be him.....am I right?]

Karutoga Oru Kshyeru is the only machine which stand before the troops, Just how can it stand there at ease while defenseless?

However, there was no one attacking the king's machine.

In response, one flying airship was landing on the street in front of royal palace in stead.

It is surprisingly quiet, how can a huge thing like that move on land.

There was one face that showed an interesting look.

[Well, well, well, It's really surprise to see the king himself come out of his way to receive us personally, if that's the case, I have no choice but to come out as well...]

A dull shining silhouette knight with ocher color emerge, Karutoga pull out the sword smoothly, facing forward as it keep pointing the sword at the sky.

As it imitate a gesture of prayer.

then it shift its blade straight, a sword extending from it and pierced the ground.

At that moment,

Jaroudeku knights who stood around gasped.

This was an act according their old tradition, a gesture of a formal duel.

There is only one person in this place that need to duel,

The king silhouette knight also acted like that to challenge the opponent.

King Akatsuki was wearing a fearless smile in his cockpit,

He had a dignified manner which was different from his usually pose.

[My name is Akatsuki Varo Kshyperuk, the protector of Kshyperuk! may i hear the name of the one who is in the airship over there which caught my sight?]

In order to responed to king Akatusuki's words, one machine stood up in the flying airship.

Only one silhouette knight that was clad in pure white armor surrounded by Tyrantor.

[I will answer, I am a son of Jaroudeku king Bartolomeu, Cristobal! the one who is in charge of this operation! king Akatsuki, as the one serving the country, I will be your opponent instead of my father!!]

[...Hou, to think that the son of king Bartolomeu also come to the front lines. there is no

shortage for opponents! I'm thank to you for accepting my challenge!]

[Noted king Akatsuki, rather the waste words, let our swords talk!!]

The pure white machine was flying in the air and landing, Jaroudeku general's personal silhouette knight, "Alkelorix" holding both shield and sword, stood against Karutoga. (I'm really grateful that author provide the Eng name, otherwise it will become Alkenyl Low Rikusa due to the complicated katana).

[Here I'm come!!]

[Prepare yourself!!]

Both Leswant and Tyrantor, All machines which were remaining on the ground also stopped their hands and watched the duel of their 2 leaders,

A silhouette knight, a giant machine which was called the strongest weapon in this world.

Because it imitate the appearance of a knight, they have a number of terribly inefficient tradition.

Among the traditions that remain from those ancient times – "A duel between the general",

This is particularly inefficient in a military perspective.

Because of that, there are cases that the fate of the whole country is on stake with this kind of fight eventually.

Karutoga is a machine with gorgeous appearance.

Therefore king cavalry has been build up with lavish value.

It posses a power which is one of the best performance in the country.

It was supposed to be a machine that was able to fight even against a Tyrantor.

Despite such a power, its owner, king Akatsuki only has average pilot skills.

However,

Alkelorix, Cristobal's silhouette knight specs slightly surpass king Akatsuki Karutoga.

While dueling,

Alkelorix which was decorated with gold on a white background wielded a sword in the

dark night which gave a vivid impression.

Karutoga received Alkelorix's blow with utmost of its power.

As it was inferior in every aspect, it was push back.

(Have I brought myself a duel that is impossible to win? These Jaroudeku machines.....those flying airship too.... Just what I am facing?)

*() character inner thought, maybe.... since it was [] when come to character line.

During several clashes the Karutoga's motion was clearly becomeing dull.

It received a slash of Alkelorix that possessed a dreadful power.

The crystal tissue began to collapse.

The difference in skill between the gentle king Akatsuki and the belligerent Cristobal was too vast.

Although Karutoga was desperately resisting, it was at its limit.

Becoming impatient It used a long swing.

Karutoga's roundhouse swing was deflected smoothly by Alkelorix's sword.

With this moment, Alkelorix's sword pierced through Karutoga belly deeply.

Crush the armor and cutting off the crystal tissue, damaging its heart and intake and exhaust mechanism.

The magic supply of machine became unstable.

As it became impossible to maintain its activity, it fell to the ground.

Its appearance became hazy in the cloud of dust.

[.....M.....Magnificent, young prince of Jaroudeku. it's your victory. now, just....finish me.]

King Akatsuki who was hit very hard, shook his head as it become dim and said his final words proudly.

As it was the ending his life, an ending befitting a king. he could not show a shameful appearance.

[King of Kshypereuk, I agree that it was a splendid fight. now, victory is in my hand, Farewell!]

Cristobal answered with a superficially meek tone voice while hiding his joy.

At the same time,

Alkelorix activated its back weapons which it did not used in the duel, shooting it's magic bullets in succession.

Expulsions around the armor which shined a sparkling beauty,

Crushed the whole body of Karutoga, burned its cockpit.

Before the wreckage of the burning king cavalry,

The hesitate soldiers of Kshyperuk army who were around were

Shouting, and began to drop their weapons.

In their culture, the result of duel by the general's machines is absolute.

Also, They don't have any other choice to choose anyway.

Before dawn, the Kshyperuk capital city, Dell Van Cool had fallen.

At the same time,

It also meant that the Kshypreuk kingdom which is one of the leading countries among the west had fallen.

That shocking news spread over the entire domestic region of Kshyperuk, then extend to all west countries.

After this, the entire state of "long history" the country of Kshyperuk fell into chaos.

Since the central command of the country itself lost its king , it was no longer able to manage a country.

But the absence of the king was not the only one problem, a lot of high ranking noble were residing in the capital during the raid, most of them died during that time.

This also spelled doom, confusion covered their entire territory as well. some got confuse

to the point that they went out of control, a failed state.

Taking advantage of this chance, the Jaroudeku army conducted a new type of warfare that no one had dared to do before.

To say it simply, the capital will be treated as an isolated state under the enemy control.

Jaroudeku army will be stationed there without withdrawing their forces, a flying airship which is their trump card can fly around the whole country for further raid purposes.

Although such as guerrilla tactic is far beyond walking on a tightrope.

as a result, Jaroudeku army obtained a great victory for themselves.

By the emergence of new weapon called a flying airship allowing a new tactic “Unable to know where and when it was going to attack” to be realised.

For the nobles of old Kshyperuk kingdom who know only “Focus defense at the border line”,

They did not try to to change their tradition in war.

For those who sensed the danger could only taken a simple measure.

Something like always put a concentrated defense force in every important city.

However, because they were wary of an attack from the air too much, it means that they will be not able to move any force easily in this war.

With this reason, it limited the action of the old Kshyperuk nobles greatly.

After the death of the king, the path of this country had begun to stray quietly.

The nobles from various areas tried to form a repeling force against the attack of the steel wing knights which had overrun the entire country.

Even pulling an army from the garrison troops in Shiruda Todaira fort.

To said that a hungry beast always sharpen its fang and claws at hand.

This is quite foolish act if you look further in the global perspective,

They are in bad shape, to the point that have to pull out the knight runners who are stationed in the fort.

A king who was a spiritual pillar for them had been lost.

The country mechanism already broken,

What should they be fighting for? to protect what? , not to mention that their place to return to was no more.

After all, the hometown which they left behind were also under attacked and it can't be overlooked.

The situation can't be called anything but checkmate.

A large number of the army from Shiruda Yukushia fort lost without a fight not too long after that,

The 3 layered fortress that Kshyperuk took pride met the fate of being broken through by the Jaroudeku army.

.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 30

Chapter 30 Part 1.

Part 1. (Un-edited)

Dell Van Cool, Capital of Kshyperuk kingdom has fallen.

Also Kshyperuk state of war which continue to being invaded.

These situation had been report back to the homeland of Jaroudeku.

The 1st crown prince, Kratos who rule the country in place of King Bartolomeu who was sick bedridden, blurring with the joyful look appearance on the “Throne” located in the center of royal palace, tell the nobles who sit in roll.

[According to the report, after conquered the fallen Kshyperuk’s Dell Van Cool has been grant favorable result to our side but it not like we can dominate the entire Kshyperuk in anytime soon. but when that happen, it almost as good as most of the western countries lie with in our palm. the remaining miscellaneous countries presence are noting more than flies, this will be the new founding of strongest nationsince the collapse of “**Fil Zehnder Ar Baden**”]

There were roaring around after the prince word.

Kshyperuk is a huge nation in the west as well as Jaroudeku (the coalition country of Rokard is a bonus).

When combine their territory together,

It could be said that it will be the birth of largest nation among majority of the west.

The west will be under one banner of Father of the world (Ancient Fil Zehnder Ar Baden) which perish long time ago again,

It no longer just a ambition dream to fulfill anymore.

[As your gentlemen also knew, we will take action with careful prearrangement. base on it, my younger brother, Cristobal had perform a well done job for me. as expected of a guy with ferocious mind, exactly deserve to be called the best sword of Jaroudeku.]

Full please laughter play along with the prince word of good mood Kratos,

The group before the throne are separate to the side as they made a way then a 17 years

old girl stepped forward.

All the sharpness gaze turn back at Kratos,

Her feature is her cloth which similar to him as the common point. (may be a royal dress)

[Look like Cris is doing well, right? the occupation progress also proceed steadily, probably a good time for let it handle by the hand of “**This Girl**” by now. as we discussed, just appoint me as political affairs assistant]

That right, the eldest daughter of Jaroudeku king, “Katalina Camilla Jaroudeku” said.

The brother (Kratos) nodded in response while smile wryly

[Um, Cristobal maybe lacking talent in this, he is good at war after all. that why we have you for that purpose, show us your great support!]

The 2nd prince, Cristobal is a combat maniac, in addition, other people also acknowledge him in that way.

Against the eldest daughter who unsuitable for war, but skilled in political ability.

In order to govern territory that now larger , it was a perfect ability fit for the job.

Received encouragement of her brother,

Katalina come down, bow along with the word of acknowledgment.

[With this, Kshyperuk kingdom invasion will be proceed without trouble, and, how are the movement of neighboring countries?]

A man in military officer cloth came forward following response to Kratos inquiry.

He is one from knight order which most of them remaining in the country for the sake of border security.

[Haa, here are my report, there were movement of country of loneliness (**Eleven Flag**) , our **Lead Bone** knight order will take this invasion chance to eliminate it. please take a loot at this, I urge you to grant us full permission on this matter.]

[How troublesome!, Just tell The Lead Bone Knights, to process with caution and safely]

The Grand master made his deep bow and keep down like that while he back away.

Then, After Kratos made his confirmation,

He rewarded each officers who were in charge in each task.

The order was gave out eventually,

The voice sent out to one man who stood in sulky face at the corner between the audience.

[... “Sir Cruz!” , your work this time was indeed play a great cause. The result that produce by “**Levitate ship**” , under the guidance of those ships, has bring a very victory to us.]

[I’m unworthy for your praise, as long as help out his royal highness and the nation, this one incompetence intend to keeping devote both heart and soul from now on]

Kratos smile in return instant but also made a small snorted, at the man who silently, keep remain lower his head in his respectful manner.

[As expected from great man who keep strive for result. from now on, keep continue to support my black knights order]

[...As your wish, then if there are 3 workshops right now, I could present you with a newly force to supplied to the black knight order]

For the man who bow in awkward gesture behind between the audience, aside his word content, it does not seem be fit attitude for a king officer who received a praise from his king. in fact, any noble are looking at the situation with their furrowed eyebrows.

[...That man, does he not seem to be unexpected rude before the very presence of his highness a bit?]

[It all right, regard the place, certainly that his gesture is scatter bird but if he can keep working fully for our country then the courtesy which has no real value can be toss aside.]

Kratos carve a deep smile on his well equipped poker face. the nobles around display their consent appearance but also not show their disturb feeling by such ambiguous attitude.

One man who just withdraw from the conference, stripped off his jacket wildly and took a quick pace to the corridor of the royal palace, loosen his neck and finally took a breath. the cloth for ceremony display a grace feeling but too cramped, almost to the point of suffocation.

there was a medium high body build under that jacket, the body seem to have been trained utterly. this show that he was nor blacksmith or knight (but both??).

[yareyare, this really feel weird... his royal highness is perform his duty as “**Proxy**” as usual. well, to received a great support in such scale, I wonder about the fact that airship suppose to be just a mean to fly in the sky.]

The name of this man is “Horacio Cruz”, who serve as Jaroudeku Kingdom head temple of technology development for 30 years.

To put it in simple word, A central figure head in workshop of development.

It is he the one who—realized his family’s theory—by proposed it to the country, his innovative idea by applied it for weapon propose caught attention and being evaluated.

His family leading theory, that is being call “**Function Logic of Pure Ether**“. the magic foundation principle which is a power that move this world,

Theoretical system that anatomize characteristic of “Ether” which could be said that it is the ground basis of the previous era.

A technology that come by multi-derived from that point.

As conclude result, it provide a full-fledged support for Kshyperuk kingdom invasion.

“Levitate Technology” –to complete this technology which is the essence of Function logic of pure ether, the first man who utilize it by show “Levitate ship” to the world.

[Thank to his royal highness, however, the problem that happen here also suffocated as well]

Not only a ship that can be fly in the sky that he need to do.

Furthermore,

It also overlap with completion date of new model silhouette knight which were hasten from former schedule, could not be achieve by just thinking or only great determination.

There were great ambition which inherited inside the royal family of Jaroudeku kingdom.

An ambition to conquered the west by force, to become a super power nation as legend before.

Now with the world first flight force accordance with new entirely management logic,

Plus the new model silhouette knight with combat capability that far greater than the old generation.

that definitely poured smolder fire seed.

[Since thing become important. the gaze of the nobles also surely a pain]

To disclose ‘Function logic of pure ether’ which had been his family conceal research and study secret, had become a perfect dogma for Horacio.

It cost a huge price to realization it,

In other word, it need a national scale support.

Therefore he, betrayed his family by lent his knowledge to Jaroudeku kingdom.

This prospectus of him achieved so well until now.

[Yare-Yare , I don’t know where is my airship flying right now, they should just hurry up end the war already, I’m too also want to flying in the sky as soon as possible.]

Horacio whose appearance still fired up and had been looking up at the sky from the hallway for a while, resume his vitality and return to the central development work which also his home as usual,

He walk toward to the landing site for an airship.

Airship that has been built until now were too few in numbers and its using still not spread much.

As its developer, he was permitted to use it at his will as method of transportation.

[Oh’yaa, I’m just arrive....]

When he reached a landing site, Horacio come across a person.

Who was trying to board the flight which set course to Kshyperuk kingdom,

It’s Princess Katalina,

At that time, he remembered the conversation that had been exchanged in the conferece.

A revelation flashed back to Haracio mind.

Soon, he took a quick pace to Katalina.

[Please excuse me, Your Highness, Katalina-sama, could you bestow me a moment of time?]

[Are you perhaps, Sir Cruz? considerate of your great deed as your airship, then it might be possible.]

Katalina send a suspicious gaze at Horacio who sudden appear, pointed at the next air ship.

[We're aware about your busy-arimasu. to sum up, I would like to ask your highness a favour-gozaimasu]

[...I must off to Kshyperuk as soon as possible, please made it briefly.]

Horacio thank her while raise up vigorously.

[As i mentioned to his highness Kratos, I plan to haste the progress of my work about black knights and airship. however, it can be done with more room in workshop, For that purpose, there is a need for “**Information**“....by the way, that best information can be obtained from the Black knight which utilize the airship across battlefield area sky only... we do not have information on other land of Kshyperuk beside that.]

Katalina face display a fully eyebrows while being retreat.

[With advantage of my knowledge power, for the sake to provide further force to our country, please allow me to accompany your highness to Kshyperuk...]

Horacio gallantly lower his head while hide his inner smile behind his expression. (this guy just want to run away and ride airship only right?)

Chapter 30 Part 2

Part 2

Woodland, Old kshyperuk kingdom center.

A sound of cavalry and horse-drawn carriage that been travel can be heard slowly between the tree which sunshine illuminated light through.

A large burden rest in the hand of maiden who ride the carriage.

They are moving slowly even they were not order to proceed quietly due to a cry and seclude circumstance happen inside the main horse-drawn carriage.

The circumstances are being showed by people who ride in horse-drawn carriages.

The fatigue was distinctively displayed on her face, the girl who has become expressionless through her weakening body.

This very girl is no one but, Eleonora, who was suppose to be a princess of Kshyperuk kingdom.

The wife of king Kshyperuk younger brother, Martina sat opposite her.

There are also another girl next to her who look at her(Eleonora) with care feeling, her name is Isadora, Martina's daughter.



[Eleonora, get a hold of yourself! I also regret about what happend to his majesty.... but, From now on, you need to support the country. also drive off those villains out from here.]

Isadora even raise her voice when she notice that Eleonora did not response back,

She keep shake the body which seem belong to a people who just broken sync with the shaking of the horse-drawn carriage.

While Martina who watching the situation display an expression by increase the wrinkle, raised her eyebrows.

Since during the escape, Eleonora had been keep up this lifeless state.

Her figure right now is very looking like a doll, un-feel the animate, as her good look which blossom in full glory is now disappear.

Look at Isadora who scream her voice to reach out her many times yet no reaction, It would be most likely end up futile.

They were barely escape from the royal palace with a sacrifice of the king on the night that capital city, Dell Van Cool was attacked by the steel wing knights.

The woman and girl group are originally plan to go straight to the east.

The younger brother of Fernando who was Martina husband is the grand duke who governing the eastern part and presence there.

There are no better place to hide the princess who need to success the throne than that area.

But their movement were hinder by the airship of steel wing knights.

With great foresight as expect of the late knight Akatsuki, the Jaroudeku troops was too busy and careless, occupied with the late king.

It took before long for them to notice the disappearance of the royal family.

The royal blood line of the country which reign supreme in the west.

The remaining of king family which become a problem in later time.

They had been relentlessly sought for information about the royal family that fled while extending their hand by invade more further inside Kshyperuk domestic area.

With the apparent appearance of ship that once across the sky, Martina group journey turn into covert travel as top priority.

It could be say that this place is the last hope for Kshyperuk kingdom.

With the precious bloodline, the last one by any chance, the escort knights choose to proceed with extreme caution.

For that sake, they try to avoid and keep contact city with minimum as much as possible to prevent a leak clue about their trail.

They keep continue a big detour in the forest and get away from highway.

The hidden passage way with rough condition which not comfortable as good as the normal one.

In such hopeless situation and nothing to support.

It can't be help nor blame as the heart of Eleonora who was pampered and grown up in a cage bird broken at very early.

[...If she continue to be like this, Even we able escape safely, The heart on this child may not be recover.]

The escape itself already a lot of problem, It could be said that they already riddled with enough problem even there have no problem with the girl body, but her mind

Martina has been struggling about Eleonora state.

Even after they arrived at grand duchy state,

They may not be able to revive Kshyperuk kingdom under legitimate banner under Eleonora who was a lineage blood.

She is clearly critically lacking the strength enough to stand on the top which is necessary for that purpose.

Martina suddenly glanced at the state of her own daughter who sit beside.

Isadora who still act with out losing gallant in this predicament,

Although Isadora wearing an air of worrying Eleonora,

She never give up on herself.

As expected of tomboy who put an air and mockery of the knight,

Could be said that her strength in this situation is hard to posses.

If Eleonora even has 10% of her daughter strength....,

While Martina who can't help but only think so, the horse-drawn carriage which had continued to proceed ride is suddenly stop its movement.

Knights in the surrounding are moving in hurry, come through inside of horse-drawn carriage.

[....What happen!?!]

The horseback knight, open the window,at Martina asked sharply to the knight who accompany.

[My apology for speak from the horseback, from our scout report, they found an abnormal situation ahead.]

[Is it a enemy?]

[I do not know the detail. unlikely by any chance, The place is very detour from the main road]

While knight said and turned around, that moment, their ear able to heard the sharp wind noise, also an arrow that flying at the same time, pierced though head of knight who peek out of window.

In front of very eye of Martina who was breath taking,

The figure of knight disappear from the window and collapsed from horseback.

[Enemy Attack! Enemy Attack!]

[Impossible! it should be further ahead isn't it !?]

[Just move any way, we are sitting duck like this....Guard!?!]

While the escort knights prepare to retreat for sudden attack.

The crossbow soldiers appear from the bushes one after another in the mean time and mercilessly slaughtered them.

All members were wearing the armor of unified design.

The coat of arms painted with Jaroudeku kingdom insignia.

The surprise attack reduce number of escort knights steadily,

Coachman who ride on the royal horse-drawn carriage try to sudden accelerated the

carriage by whipping the horse.

He also one who had receive a knight training.

The speed could be said that was to be fully maximize,

However, it was too late for such a situation.

Suddenly, a light come flying with dazzling orange land on the ground in the way of the horse-drawn carriage, follow up with an explosion.

Strong wind fan the fire overwhelm a horse and kill it.

Horse-drawn carriage was roll over 180 degree, land and bounce on the ground about 3 times.

Full of multiple footsteps approaching from the front.

A sound of armor made from metal that hitting each other,

Further more, a high-pitched sound of drive by crystal tissue can be heard, also the muffled intake sound of ether reactor sucking the air too.

There is no need to explain the true identity of sound origin,

A giant knight in jet-black armor that higher than trees– a silhouette knight is approaching slowly.

It appear not only one machines, one after another are coming from the surrounding in total of 6 silhouette knight machines appear to en-circle around the horse-drawn carriage.

A giant knight with armor of heavy black iron could bee seen.

Just as the other day that the capital city was trampled by the new mass production machine of Jaroudeku kingdom, “**Tyrantor**”.

It projected the back armed from its back, which had a trace of pale light that prove a existence of magic bullet.

The flesh and blood soldiers are running in agonize from the foot of Tyrantor.

They are completely surround the overturned carriage that unable to move.

All of them were line up with crossbow and cane.

Then a person come out before them was a man in armor. assume to be a captain who try

to pull his men together, raised the distort voice in the form of smile.

[The person who in the horse-drawn carriage, come out to the outside. resistance is futile.]

Of course probably suffered a great damage above all degree by surprise, only silence come return.

But he snorted the unpleasant-up, cast a demand again.

[Apart from us, the only survival are now only you. I'm also thinking about blow this remain carriage too, you know?]

It seem to be blatant threat but, Tyrantor aim its weapon according to his word, how was it?

[Please wait.]

There are sigh sound only a minute.

A really answer had been return.

The man straight himself raised flutter and eyebrows.

The door of the carriage which had been overturned is [**being blown from the inside**].
**did she kick it to force open??

Jaroudeku soldiers are scaring and set up their weapons.

A figure crawling come out slowly from horse-drawn carriage.

It's Martina, she drawn herself up on top of horse-drawn carriage and glaring at ordinary soldiers which surrounding area.

[Fuh!, to even bring along such exaggerated thing as silhouette knight. Well? you group just gang up on one woman who not even hold a single weapon, am I not allow to even speak?]

Strengthening her woman tall stance on top of horse-drawn carriage and overlooking a large surrounding area, while wearing a thin dirty dresses for a long journey,

despite her state, She did not look lose her majesty and power

The soldiers recognize her instant, the man who was a captain also relieved, he regain the nasty-nice attitude and recall the situation.

[My, my, my, to think that her royal highness Martina-sama was here. I almost extremely

fear that we would be not able to meet your grace face.]

[Suit yourself....]

Martina ignored the captain man word with a frown and looked around.

Her group had been completely surrounded by soldiers.

Further more, there also have silhouette knight in far away.

on the contrary, her escort knights who protect her are all already fallen.

The situation is too unfavorable.

Even use herself as a decoy, will Eleonora and Isadora be able to escape successfully?

She bitten her lip and tighten herself for not be able to reach a conviction.

[His highness Cristobal command us to capture you lady, we can confirm your safety.... as long as no more resistance being made, I could said that there will no un-expect thing happen. that if you follow us peacefully, but if not, we may need resort to do something that rashly un-call for.]

Martina eyebrows close in displeasure at the captain word that block her from made the decision while did not even try to hide his overwhelming superiority.

Indeed, there was no room for her rebellious mind to decide what to do there.

After all, his giant knights are intimidating her in silence.

A human being can turned into ground meat instant, anymore resistance is meaningless in front its power.

[Surely, you should already foresaw it coming...no matter whatever we do, it will end up as a failure, those Silhouette knights are bad news.]

A chagrin down murmur could be heard from Martina,

The man captain wear up his ugly smile then continue his word,

[Ops, It may be too late to say this. but from the direction that your horse-drawn carriage heading, there are seem be a ships appearance aimed at the east territory. it is certainly targeted at the late king brother territory. however, it really shame isn't? since we are, **“the one who come from that direction(the east territory)”**, you know?]

Up until now, Martina heart was full of chagrin of stout so this news take away all her will

power.

[I...It can't be.... You guys!]

[As expected of clever lady, you should be able to figure it out already right? that the pride airship fleet of our country! The Steel Wing Knight orders, are heading to conquer “**Fontanie**” , the east capital city of this dukedom!]

The fact struck hard at Martina who was collapse as it was illusion.

The frighten news keep flooding, the sound of annoying blood flow could be heard badly.

While enduring the worst premonition, she glared at man at the her brave heart.

While he pretend to be unnaturally daunted as he mock her, he keep split more despair after stop being pretended.

[Yes , yes, look like the Prince brother himself was die in the midst of conquered battle too or something like that. with this, the remaining royal blood in this country is you lady only. there was no more place to escape for you anymore.]

At last, Martina was score down to her knees.

Despair, filled in her heart, sink her, and shattered all hope that support her.

(arr.....arrrr....mou, everything is over now. both Dear husband (Fernando) and Brother in law (Augustin) are all gone... how can one girl gonna regain back this country.....?)

The soldiers keep encircle them closer to made her give up.

No way to escape, no power to resist.

Dead-end is before her, include the captured daughter who had been shivering in horse-drawn carriage.

The last hope which place in old Kshyperuk duchy, The princess Eleonora party had fell into the hand Jaroudeku kingdom.

This news keep spreading enough to break the spirit of defiance that remained in the old Kshyperuk kingdom nobles.

It was happened in west calendar years 1281,

At early summer of smell smolder season.

Jaroudeku kingdom conquered all of Kshyperuk kingdom land and complete its invasion.

Chapter 30 Part 3.

Part 3.

The great steep peak mountains, Obinie being decorate with lightly cloud on its top.

There are a road passing through by foot on the mountainside that place between mountains which also indicated the end border of west countries.

The name of this highway is “**East-West highway**” (Occident Road) , to the east—this path also one of the few that lead to Fremmevir Kingdom.

It was a place that swarm with Fremmevir kingdom mighty magic beast.

However,

This place was blessed as well since this is the only place in Obinie that rich with fertile granary at the same time.

The merchants are surely flock around with exceed number on this severe mountains since there were great demand.

That day too,

1 group of “**Merchant Caravan**” had visit the land of west beyond the east-west highway.

There are an extend long procession which comprise of a number of wagon at meandering highway for the sake to get over the slope.

They are seemed to be full-fledged merchants since they were load with heavy luggage.

The leading carriage which was going steadily suddenly stop after saw a stop sign.

[Is there something happen? “**Young Master**“]

[....something wrong. there should be custom check point around here right? or did I got it wrong?]

There is a appearance of border check point at the tip of highway which spread at the foothills of Obinie mountains for the sake to enter Kshyperuk kingdom.

However,

The flag that fluttering in the custom check point area was not belong to Kshypereuk kingdom.

No matter what country flag was raised, it won't be problem as long as one did know what happen in the country.

However, for this group, it was a situation that they lack information for trying enter in this country.

[Is that so, the flag isn't?, then, what are you gonna do?]

[...it had been decided. let begin "**Negotiation**" immediately.]

Wrinkle display between eyebrows of person who was called young master.

A petite boy with child like appearance nod in return then turn around and convey everything toward the back of the caravan.

Soon, caravan resume its movement while aim for the border checkpoint.

[...Yareyare, look like our group really unlucky, right...]

Soldiers group that stand guard at check point are currently set up a campfire before the majesty of Obinie which cut blue sky.

The engraved coat of arms on their armor indicate that they are Jaroudeku men.

"Ancient Land", The easternmost land of Kshyperuk kingdom already occupied by them.

[Hey, if there are check point at such a place then it would mean that there are something on the other side right?]

It's a kingdom policy anyway, for having soldiers stationed on this only road in the mountains that full of forest.

The unpopular place which have less attraction and any value.

They look up at the faint mountains continuously and have a fun chat intently in the free time.

[What was it.....um....there should be a remote country with a name of Furanberuju.]
(it's Fremmevir kingdom but pretty that even soldiers are don't know the exact detail.)

[Haa...it far beyond Obinie right?...no matter what place are there, there should not be

any country right? since it far beyond the end of this world.]

In this era, most of human race are living with in the “west countries”.

For many people and soldiers, “**The World**” only being refers limited to this west part only.

Except some merchant and the one who hold the authority, in most common sense, Obinie mountains could be called as the end of the world.

It's reason for soldiers group which were task to “**keep an eye on the end of the world**” had a very low motivation and in predicament.

The fact that there are border check point here on this very highway prove it is being use as a road.

They also understood this reason as well , after all, This place was outside of world's interest.

[Truly, just why this place need to be guarded....what, something there....!?!]

Soldiers who tried to continue the heat chat suddenly found out the accident on the former line of sight.

There are cloud of dust rising violently and advancing on the highway near the forest that cover mountains surface in the mean time.

The gallop sound roar across the land and heading to this place.

It resound at regular interval, its deep melody sound familiar to the human ears who was a soldier.

However, the sound is surely “**Too Heavy**” to be a horseshoe sound, as it almost a sound generate from silhouette knight, it was full of weight and intensity.

[Wrong, it's too weird, for such a sound... to be a horse? if that the case then it was too fast! it's will arrived soon, hurry up and close the gate!! damn, I don't care even you have to drop it!]

Soldier who was drank a beer call out.

This border check point is installed with pull out gate function type,

It have a gimmick that allow to close the gate quickly by cut the rope that support the gate in the case of emergency.

In response to the heartbreaking cries of soldiers who was monitoring,

The soldiers rushed over in hurry to the opening and closing device and cutting the rope lead with a slashing axe.

The knight runners group who heard an abnormal situation also get ready for combat while the steel gate being dropping and resounding rattle and pulley then gate touched the ground.

The state of the art mass production machine of Jaroudeku kingdom, “Tyrantor” are rising up and take a extraordinary readiness for war inside the check point.

The abnormality came down from the highway and appeared before their eyes.

[What the heck is this thing!? not a horse....a human? don't tell me, is it a....silhouette knight...?]

“**That Thing**” appeared in the day light, with an upper body that shape resemble a human but the lower part is exactly a horse, presented with a presence of half human half horse.

If one take a good look at it then armor of steel could seen same as crystal tissue sound could be heard so it's definitely a silhouette knight.

However,

The appearance before them is too bizarre for such a thing,

The solidified soldiers dropped their jaw and having a round eyes.

“**That Thing**” that came down lightly before them a centaur knight “Tzendrinble” is stopped and look at the closed gate of the check point.

The abnormal centaur knight shape which drag 2 huge grind cavalry horse-drawn carriage type in tow, dropped its speed which cause a big screech and spark.

While its run on the land had blow up cloud of dust and increasing,

Many variant of the horse-drawn carriage are stopped in front of the gate.

A voice from somewhere reach the stiff soldiers which stand frozen and not able to collect their thought.

[Howdy! we are “**Silver Trading Firm**“, and on task to carrying the trade goods the mountain over there. would you kind to let us pass?]

[Don't said a blatant lie! no way for merchant to posses such a silly horse!!]

There was a slightly sighing voice back at him who said a retort word.

[What is this, you don't know? since mountain across the country are swarm with magic beast which really dangerous. A special steel horse is needed!]

[Even it is a special horse, there was no such a thing here! you guys too suspiciously! all of you, leave and get down from the machine and line up side by side. let me examine the cargo and yours id!]

After secretly exchange nod in the back, Tyrantor corps ready their stance to fight anytime.

Because those claim did not seem to be true, they also know noting about group that called themselves “**Silver Trading Firm**” since there never have any group that posses equipment this much.

[Hou.... Could you tell me one thing before that? about that flag, it did not seem to belong to Kshyperuk kingdom at all right? just where are you guys come from?]

The soldiers should have notice that the asked voice tone is slightly become lower. however, he answer before “**he realize it**”.

[What a slowpoke ear merchant... more suspicious of you guys. Kshypereuk kingdom “**perish**” long time ago. that right! this place now belong to us , under management of Jaroudeku kingdom!]

[...I see, so it already happen, if that the case then we don't have time to play with yours Q&A game anymore.]

A high pitching air sound is flowing from the huge eye-catching wagon that towed to a centaur knight.

It was a operation sound of magical converter when silhouette knight magic engine sucking ether in the atmosphere , changing its tone.

Then immediately following with,

The cover cloth are gallantly remove and purging the steel wire that secure the load

The golden glow radiate with in sight and reflected sunshine brilliantly.

It appear to be,

A silhouette knight with a lion design and golden armor, “**Gordesleo**” and inside its cockpit, the image of check point gate is being display on holo monitor before the bloody

thirsty Emurys eyes.

[If people speak about how open the gate unnaturally then break through with a force is also another one....!]

Jump off the horse-drawn carriage, the back arms of golden lion are activated and deploy.

Then the armor magic script on both shoulder armor which is silhouette Arms are open up and reveal the inside.

Emblem graph (magic emblem surgery formula) flow up with enormous mana and immediately display a magic phenomenon.

[You are in the way!!]

The deadly weapon of the golden lion, “Howling Blast”(Shishio Todoroki) was roar up, sound of breaking atmosphere are generated, interlocked madou armements of multiple devices and fire an over-standard output magic strike.

It consumed a huge amount of mana in exchange to generate such a power and send a surging overwhelm shock wave to the gate.

The steel gate that possibly robust enough to endure against a assault from duel-class monster is not flexible enough to withstand such a shock wave.

After the crack ran across the informal wall of the base, the gate was blown away with its momentum after being destroyed.

That huge gate flying and land a clean hit at Tyrantor which currently prepare for war behind on that occasion gate.

Since everything were all unexpected, it did not have any time to evade that.

Tyrantor, a machine that boasting its heavy armor to withstand a blow attack was sent flying and turned into wreck with a single blow, its large fuselage collapse and scattered around.

This was just too crazy.

[Haa....impossible. to destroyed the gate and send the entire body of silhouette knight flying, was such a ridiculous power really come from madou weapon!?!]

[No, it is too much unreasonable!]

Confronted by the far beyond expected power, the upset are indeed ran across the black knights.

Took advantage of that chance, the centaur knight had follow up by started moving. purge itself from the horse-drawn carriage, Tzendrinble galloping into the checkpoint that lose a gate.

The sound of coming horseshoe which shatter the land are growing, by equipped with 2 ether reactor allow it to generated screaming noise characteristic which sound like a neigh of the horse.

Tzendrinble taking the assault pattern with lengthy lance by setting up the charge lance (assault cavalry spear).

[Kuh, this thing...]

Not waste any sprint momentum, stab its spear into black knight.

Blow up harsh at the extruded torso of black knight.

Fragment of the crumble crystal armor are jump around and scattered.

However, Tyrantor did not fallen even after receiving such an extensive damage, it grab the spear and push the cavalry back in the reverse.

[what is this thing? isn't this insanely thick!! wait, let go of my spear!]

An unexpectedly young voice raise a cry in protest from the centaur knight.

while its broken knee destroy it balance, the black knight keep holding and did not let go the spear.

At that moment, another 1 of Tzendrinble also came running, holding the same cavalry spear, stab at black knight with its accelerated force.

Even for a black knight, it couldn't took anymore attack since it already suffered a great damage from earlier attack.

The puncture spear land at torso part, destroy the armor of black knight by keep thrusting with power, the spear did not only went through inner skeleton but also pierce thru crystal tissue.

The upper body which sever penetrated with the 2 spears is finally fall down to the ground gravely.

[Yo...You bastard! Just what kind of merchant are you! don't expect you would get any mercy after this!!]

Tyrantor corps suddenly went into rage after recovered from startle.

There are 2 squads of Tyrantor (6 machines) stationed in this border check point.

Although its number are more than enough to assure the safety of check point such as this remote place.

2 of them already destroyed in an instant.

For the knight runners of Tyrantor, both the golden lion and centaur knight deem to be heinous dream in their eyes.

They took a readiness stance, raise up their heavy mace and shield.

By put up enough defense with no opening gap to prevent any attack from contact Tyrantor armor.

They don't need to be fear anymore even an enemy is a young monster. They thought that.

....At that time, The terror is roaring. it was a sound that can not be express just a simple roar from one **"Direction"**.

The cry of behemoth emerge as just to notify widely enormity its great strength power.

The intense intake sound of behemoth heart are being emitted to the surrounding, shake the land, trembling the trees.

[...everyone are so mean, why you guys start the fight when leave me behind like this. I'm too, **"Ikaruga"** too, please include us too!]

Another "baggage" is start moving on the top of the remaining wagon in front of check point.

The cover cloth is swirling burn , and suddenly blow up leave with crimson lotus color trail.

Something just jumped into the air and penetrate their center rank.

For soldiers group which watch the situation on the top of check point, this battle is something that go beyond their own sanity.

There are shadow cover over them.

It's unlikely a bird, it definitely not a beast either.

There was a figure with a shape similar to the huge human..... silhouette knight's shadow.

that right, a “**Silhouette Knight**” is flying in the sky.

It is not easy for silhouette knight to climb upon the wall of check point base which has a height of 30 meters.

Something allow this silhouette knight able to do that, more than that, it even jumped high up in the sky.

[Impossible.....]

Even soldiers fall into confusion, they should immediately noticed some fact.

That there are overhanging shadow from their above, that would mean its “**landing point**” are the place where they are.

Those who are drank a beer are being commanded to escape immediately.

“**It**” landed into stone wall.

The elongated shadow that light up with the day light has reach the foot of Tyrantor.

while no longer able to grasp a fully situation, Jaroudeku soldiers stop the movement as being frozen somewhere.

“**It**” stood up slowly.

It was a knight, approximately 10 meters tall, unusual design body armor, holding a wacky shape large sword in its hand.

However,

the most eye catching is in its back.

After all, this machine posses 4 extended further arms from the back which is crazy thing.

The centaur knight is already enough to shocking but this, this odd presence is also something unbelievable.

Before the horrify Jaroudeku soldiers can’t be anything more than Silver Phoenix knight grand master personal machine for Ernesti Echevarria.

The devil mask warrior which posses 6 arms, “**Ikaruga**“, surround itself with crystal eye in the back , gave off strangely human feeling on surface cover.

[Saaa.... Let go, Ikaruga... let begin the battle desuyo!]

tuned up by the merry Eru, main power reactor “**Queen Coronet**” and sub power reactor “**Behemoth Heart**” are being increase its power.

The swell of raging magic being produce by the heart of giant monster flown magic into magius jet thruster accord to Eru procedure.

Engulf its whole body with a vermilion steam like a cloth.

Ikaruga fly out again to the sky by kicking the wall of checkpoint.

Receive a back light, Ikaruga steeped into shadow.

Knight runner of Tyrantor who was only get a glimpse of the figure for a moment, remembered the abysmal fear of odd eyeball at its back of the surface cover, “**Fitted Eye**”.

[Such a thing... for real?...]

Ikaruga which come from the sky, swing down 2 large swords with both hands with its momentum as aiming for the confused Tyrantor.

Even lack the sharpness of thick sword, it eat up through Tyrantor shoulders with the force of momentum and crushing both arms.

with the Ikaruga insane output, the large sword went through feet and gouge the ground in perfect motion.

one of rage Tyrantor falling down with out any problem and become another fallen.

[One down.]

the other side who was collapsed is Tyrantor, Ikaruga rise up slowup.

When look at the enemy, Ikaruga that rise up slowly after take down Tyrantor which clad with heavy armor in a instant, fear run across the black knights.

[Kuh....damn you!! who is this guy!! go get him! attack in formation!!]

While raising a weak war cry in desperation, The black knights able to recover from a demorale state.

The opponent is an unusual enemy and they don't have no room nor time to examine it's characteristic.

With thought about avoid close combat should be a good choice in this case, start up their back arms.

When they thought they got this, Earlobe of Jaroudeku soldiers are being ringing.

Ikaruga which obtained a recoil which fledgling with erratic speed, thrust forward with red crimson flame trail from whole body armor.

[Hyi.....!!]

Ikaruga avoid a magic bullet that from a groaning Tyrantor that shoot reflexively with slightly kicking.

Then, draw closer into sword range at next moment.

Ikaruga maintain its momentum while swinging down a large sword.

Tyrantor which able to held up its shield in time with not only a sheer luck.

Large sword nailed down the shield and distort it by raw power causing Tyrantor down its knee on the land.

Crystal tissue from the arm part that support its shield emerge from armor part and bounce out , several of them become visible.

The fact that it did not its fold knee almost a miracle.

The black knight trying to struggle by push enemy back yet it was being push back instead.

The knight runner himself cast a suspected eye.

Tyrantor which is a heavy weight machine is **“Losing in strength contest“**.

A power which able to win against the black knight that reign supreme in the west, The variant enemy.

The fact he heck himself about who is the other opponent can be understanding also it can't be help that he can't do anything but stand in fear.

Then Ikaruga continue its next merciless attack at the held down Tyrantor.

4 arms that had been fold out from Ikaruga back wriggle, deploy exhibition.

Should said that 2 hands held up halberd on each hand and draw a circular trajectory then stab at Tyrantor. (drill attack??)

By the body hammered with a blown that full of centrifugal force,

The sword went over both arms and go for Tyrantor's shoulder.

while Tyrantor lose its mean to defense due to stunned, 2 attacks strike its body.

Tyrantor that received a scathing slash bent its waist and fall down.

[Two Down!]

The remaining Tyrantor are only 2 left.

The knight runners are complete fall into panic state.

They are member of Bronze Claw knights order, as a proof of being elite, they were gave a Tyrantor.

Even they already pass many combats and fight many times until now, but this enemy is too much abnormal for them.

Before the unimaginable threat, they can't come up with any means to turn back the tide.

Despite that fact, They are can only shooting their back weapons randomly from the distance with determine to strike.

The armor warrior or Centaur knight or golden lion, they don't know which one need to be aim first and totally confused, with that reason cause their aim accuracy to be very rough.

Magic bullets are screaming with sound while flowing in the air, go around.

Ikaruga evade magic bullets easily while wielding its halberd.

Tyrantors keep continue its earnestly brute attack like this and drawn out its large sword despite it still out of sword range.

[Really an excellent brute attack method ! I gonna come to you now desuyo. you fine with it right?]

Eru, Ikaruga's large sword is not wielding naturally like the usual standard large sword.

The moment that he operated a certain lever, Ikaruga's large sword split in half.

Inside its thick blade is clearly an unnecessary mechanism for a sword.

Silver plate, steel frame, and catalyst crystal forming up.

Ikaruga's large sword flowing with overwhelming mana which dwell on the tip of bright installed catalyst crystal.

Which mean that this sword also serves as silhouette arms function base weapon.

This huge chunk red sharp metal is also the latest silhouette armament, "**Cannon Sword**" was its name.

The immense magic power which remain flaring was invoked, tactical magic (Over Spell) that create by engraved magic circuit in in the coat of arms form.

A brightly brilliant shining magic bullet flying toward Tyrantor.

While the initiated magic bullets flew as it was blurring and come from outside of common sense, the targeted black knight took a hit which impossible to evade.

This cannon sword posses destruction power rival to "**Falcon**" (Roar of flame spear), a large madou weapon platform that installed on one of horse drawn carriage, the "**Chariot**" (combat horse-drawn carriage).

The overwhelming firepower that was created to fight the division class monster did not only piercing and blown away particular parts of Tyrantor's heavy armor but totally erase its existence in explosive flame.

[3 down!]

The last Tyrantor already fled with its all power at that time.

A wise answer in a sense since there is no one left to think about how to challenge the variant demon anymore.

The 2 squads which comprise of 6 Tyrantors that stationed here was wipe out in the blink of an eye, there is no more ally remained.

Of course, Ikaruga did not let it happen.

Including armor deployment, it begin to rise up and spray a vermilion trail as demon emerge from a gap of hell.

By received an overwhelming thrust from magius jet thruster, Ikaruga appearance become disappear.

Wrong,

With obtained overwhelming speed between a moment from the rest, It reached the fled Tyrantor instant.

The black knight didn't even have a time to leave any word.

Cannon sword stab inside the extrude rear armor and crush its spine.

Then, blade of cannon sword which remain stuck is expanding,

shoot magic bullet directly from inside Tyrantor and blast it,

Its figure transform into iron scrap in the next moment.

[4 down!eh? is it over already? it probably still not enough.... for Ikaruga...]

Among the remaining of afterglow explosion, Eru who pilot Ikaruga reveal his discontent like a child who still not had enough candy snack.

Wielding and buzzing halberd at Ikaruga's back.

[look like it is inevitable-ne.....]

Leaving a genuinely regretful murmur, Ikaruga begin its transition by folding back its arm along with halberd in the original state.

Following by rotate the Cannon sword in both hands and fixing its small auxiliary arm and store it in the waist armor.

Finally, it raise the exceptionally large roar, a noise that bury the entire surroundings.

Ikaruga shift back Queen Coronet power to normal output and stop the behemoth heart function, ending combat situation.

[...If you think about Eru-kun gonna sortie, then the battle will end before we knew it-ne.]

[Well, no matter hard that black thing is, Eru and Ikaruga probably un-stop-able anyway.]

At that time at the border check point, the twin Tzendrinble looked at each other after they noticed roar that shake up the battlefield.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 31.1

Chapter 31 Part 1

Part 1. Un-edited

Recently, eastern old Kshyperuk land.

A strange rumor was flowing around while Jaroudeku army occupied this land.

Its content can be describe as “The dead reaper with devil face which stood on the strange looking horse-drawn carriage had run rampage and hunt down their silhouette knight”.

At first, most of soldiers laughed off before this rumor.

After the fallen of Kshyperuk kingdom which lost its major threat, no more reason for them to be afraid.

They are brave, absolutely confidence in themselves.

That why they spent time without suspect anything—and then, they met “It”.

[Strengthening the defense line over there!! You will get pick off if stay separate like that!]

[I... , Impossible, there are no way to defense it... against that reaper...]

The following words was interrupted by a neigh sound which penetrate through air.

The very nightmare presence appearing before the Tyrantors that try to hasty regroup its formation.

The irregular sound of horseshoe that split the land keep closing.

Its identity is a giant armored horse-drawn carriage which being pulling around by twin Tzendrinble.

Designed as third special purpose cavalry carriage “**Chariot**”.

Further more, the devil mask reaper in question (Ikaruga) can be fully seen on it.

When they found out that the rumored reaper turn out to be nothing more than this very formidable presence.

The black knights (Tyrantor) confronted it while become significant upset and more bold.

Because they can't outrun it with just only their leg.

[These wait be collect silhouette knight of you guys....I will take it!]

It did not state any question nor answer but only left a decisive declaration.

From certain distance of it, Four sword cannon are visibly being setup on both side of Ikaruga's back.

Red magic bullet are gushing out and turn into mercilessly explosive flame fly directly at one of black knights direction.

Follow up with Tzendrinble's jump in and begin its charge assault at the disarray formation that collapsed.

Received such a momentum and weight assault, the bulk black knight was sent flying regardless its armor or shield.

The last remaining black knight that stubbornly survived its charge was hit with *Kiryuken (beast slaying blade) which extending from the war horse-drawn carriage while run passing it.

and broke like character “ < ”.

*A scythed blade that attached to Greek war chariot

This thick lump of metal sword is able to take out many shell beasts at once at the time.

The armored black knight too, fall as its prey without any exception.

When the ruinous dash of the deadly horse-drawn carriage (chariot) complete its run, only wreckage of black knights remain behind.

The war horse drawn carriage loosen its momentum by perform a large arc turn is running back.

[Yes! yes!, we were able to stock a lot of “**Merchandise**” today-ne. lets head back immediately and use it for the negotiation!]

[Eru-kun, look like you have a lot fun-ne....]

[Thank to this guy, I able to leap all i want in the world... together with the silhouette knight, Ikaruga.]

After that, the third corps which appeared after them came to recover the wreck of black knights.

Later after that, nothing remain behind.

The scene that patrol troops was completely spirit away had been born.

Thus, The followed incident that cut off the intelligence relay for black knight corps during its patrol in eastern region keep happen one after another.

The rumors of death horse-drawn carriage being further spread, let alone its disappearance already planting fear in soldiers on the front line. this become more severed.

While this rumor continue to haunting Jaroudeku army, they still need some time to realize the truth behind these rumors, about the presence of formidable enemy.

*

A horse-drawn carriage with fully load coming while making a sound of horseshoe echoing along the way.

A bit un-natural heavy load for the average horse-drawn carriage size, causing an attraction.

More over, because the very wagon was attached with centaur knight (Tzendrinble).

Accompanied with Kardetolle corp, A silhouette knight that acted as its escort.

[Somehow, the rumor is really true....?]

“Baron Modest Retonmaki”, the noble man of old Kshyperuk kingdom is looking with wide-eyed at “Merchandise” that lie up before him.

As it was a matter of course, because the wreckage of silhouette knight that visibly seen on the wagon—belong to Tyrantor, a mass product machine of Jaroudeku.

The surprise did not limited to Baron Retonmaki only,

All forces that the nobles held are all older mass product generation, Leswant, it can't match the mighty of Jaroudeku army's Tyrantor at all.

The battle so far already prove this unpleasant result.

[How is it?, my **“Firm's Merchandise”**? don't look away with just only this, there still more, you know?]

Emurys proudly stretched his breast while showing the result of **“Purchase Contract”** of **“Silver phoenix firm”**.
(honestly, this masho man....)

The truth behind such a ridiculous rumor, Masked reaper that has made victimization of Jaroudeku's army, lie in front the eye of baron.

However, although he was startled and excited at first, he went with a clouded look later.

[.....Ah, certainly you guys power were enough for request without a doubt, It was a splendid "Merchandise", Our hand both unexpected tied up and outdone by the enemy such as Jaroudeku's army. This result deserve a praise, But you know... this is just only that all. Even we manage to obtain a victory locally, a good start, it will only end up with more enemy will come at next time.]

Baron Retonmaki speak in depression while drop his shoulder.

[We can't win this, no matter how much strong you guys are, in the end, you guys will be only got corner..... that why even you guys, I wonder about you guys can come out without scratch or not?]

Emurys only take a sip a cup of tea wildly in tut-tut manner despite the initiated good mood.

The rumors spreading around due to silver phoenix knight continued to crushing black knight at various place however, they also began to feeling the gradually stalemate.

Even they have a high force calibers as silver phoenix knight, in the end, the entire force when summarize all three corps still only about 30 machines , a little, they were overwhelming inferior in numbers.

The number that currently act to "**protect the land**" but definitely not suitable for act as attack force.

[....because of enemy's might, you already give up?]

[There are various speculation for the weak nobles such as us. to have a people who even not able protect their own, why are you so against it? furthermore, the precious royal lineage already been lost and no longer remain, it already too late. this country will never return to its former state.]

Thus silver phoenix knights objective is working hard to contact the survived nobles of old Kshyperuk but they got unsavory return reply instead. there were many reason, as example, they lack the noble who able to raise a "**flag**" to carry out a resistance.

[Did Aunt's group already....really?]

[I don't know. It just as you can heard from their words, They already fallen into enemy hand. and we can't be too optimistic hope. even they still alive, they already beyond help...]

Emurys intercepted by last word of Baron.

The earlier remark, thing like that can't be accepted easily for him.

Baron Retonmaki also apologized immediately for his gaffe slip tongue.

Martina, Emurys's Aunt, is Fernando's wife, The grand duke who is highest noble in the eastern region.

It obviously that he to accept it by just words.

After all, although Baron Retonmaki about to acknowledge the assistance of silver phoenix firm, to speak any more of this would be prevaricating.

unlike other noble similar to him, that only promised secretly to lend a hand but they are all refuse to continue the fight.

[...useless bump, no matter how much we took out small fry, nobody want take part in it.]

Emurys raised the beat up like savage beast.

For the noble to took such indecisiveness attitude situation can be understand, further more, the bad mood raise every day when concern the whereabouts of royal member in addition.

[Fortunately, We only came to hit in order to catch a glimpse of enemy power so far, I guess it's time to change our plan soon, need to think for a while, for a "special method" in fight in order to obtain the cooperation from the nobles in addition...]

Eru still held up his arm but there was a feeling that the direction of trouble slightly shifted in his case.

[Are there really nothing we can do in this land?....]

Even full of high enthusiasm Emurys begin to doubt.

The act of silver phoenix knights begin to show going clog up, the news that change the entire situation begun to unfold.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 31.2

Chapter 31 Part 2

After think it for a while, I decide to change Dorotheeo name to Dorote.

Part 2.

The Ancient Kshyperuk principality can be divided roughly into five regions.

Beside the imperial city at the central area, there were “**Four-way territory**” separated at East-West-North-South direction.

The king’s brother, Archduke “**Fernando Nevalez Kshyperuk**” was lived in the grand duchy capital there and governed the east land.

The term “**was lived there**” already a past tense when the Grand duke himself had died during the invasion of Jaroudeku kingdom in the past , the land had been took over by Fernando’s younger brother, “**Akatsutei**” who succeed the grand duke along with the right in throne and bestowed with this land.

*His name can be read as “Aukusti” in western name too.

Since his last name still attained “Kshyperuk” , the royal family name, his territory is “**Fernando grand duchy**” or just call it “**East Territory**” as short version.

Even you see it like this, the archduke position is only give to someone who connected to royal lineage.

Inevitable, now, everything are eliminated and perished in the invasion.

The east capital dukedom, “**Fontanie**” is now conquered by Jaroudeku kingdom, in order to govern the east territory, “**East Strategic Point**” was made with a portion of Black Jaw Knight’s order which stationed in the city.

*

Once in the past, the royal castle that served the Archduke, the “**Raspedo**” Castle is now take over by Jaroudeku’s army and used as their base.

Raspedo castle has high tower placed in four directions.

The tower of the old days that had been used to lookout the surrounding, now lose its function as time move toward to the peaceful era. you could say that it is a decoration to the castle.

However, recently,

It was being re-used in practical way with a completely different purpose.

In it, there is a room is, A girl who wandering her line of sight in a listless appearance.

The name of the girl, Eleonora who inherit blood line of the king. a rightful legitimate princess.

which mean this room is being use to “**imprison her**“, although the appearance precisely looked modestly, it could not be call a room for accommodate the royal family.

The girls spent her time gaze at iron bars fitted window and an unusually sturdy door randomly, does not know when her time gonna come, she sighed.

For not able to see a change for better outcome, this is truly a dull room.

After fallen in the hand of Jaroudeku’s army, she was imprisoned here, in Raspedo castle.

This room located on the top floor of steeple in Raspedo castle.

With the height of several ten meters from the ground, the way to get on there or leave there is to use a single long spiral staircase only.

A tight security has been laid around the area to prevent the girl from escape this place.

Even this place is easy to escape, whether the girl has the resolve to does it is still another question.

She keep repeated passed the entire day with sigh and silence.

The king who was her father no longer alive.

With strong desire to escape her painfully feeling reality, plus the fact that being isolated from her aunt, Martina and her cousin, Isadora, which also has been imprisoned.

Caught in helpless situation,

She even turn away her eyes from the reality & her future even more.

The girl doesn’t know where she can find hope and become sluggishness.

One day, something happen.

An event of visitor who came suddenly which break the silence in the room,

Only a sound of heavy knock from door was made out of a room.

For the change that happen too suddenly, she was start to trembling in fear.

A maid who was in front the door has move toward next room while conceal her breath.

After she exchange looking several times at the door, mechanical sound which happen from using key resounded.

It can be seen clearly from far away,

A strong omen indicate that someone gonna enter the room.

The owner of omen walking toward Eleonora who does not directly strive her line of sight at it.

[Does the mood around here suit your taste? “**Formerly**” Kshyperuk princess.]

The girl shaking lightly, raise her line of sight in frightened appearance at Cristobal, the supreme general of Jaroudeku’s army ,the second Jaroudeku’s prince who stood over there.

[fuh, are you not a bit too “**calm**“?]

Initially, when got imprisoned in this land,

Eleronora became restless but after cry out and lament for a while, when her emotion become sluggish, she got calmer.

[Today, I bring you the good news to you. be rejoice, the method how to “**use**” you has been decided. in order to stabilize Kshyperuk region, time has come, your bloodline will be put to use.]

Not hesitate to ignore her reaction,

Cristobal tell her in pomposity manner and distort the end of his mouth.

[You shall be become the wife of this great me]

[S...such a thing...how unpleasant...-desu]

At last,

Eleonora manage to gather her will and squeezed out her return word, a slender voice, face down and make an intention to reject him clearly.

However, that does not disturb Cristobal's smile.

[Do you think you have a choice? I don't think so. be obediently and agree to it.]

Cristobal leaned closer, reach his hand and draw out Eleonora's arm that flee from him reflexively and whispered to her.

[If you gonna reject that much, then you have no any value. the people that got caught together with you, I will hasten their execution date.]

Cristobal sadism's smile reflected on the wide opened stark eyes of Elenora.

[The daughter of grand duke is it?, the continue of bloodline of who once was king's relative. her fate depend on your decision. will this enough to motivate you? after all, **“she was caught together with her mother”**.]

[A....ah.... it can't be...]

Leave the collapsed Eleonora who lost all her power,

Cristobal turn back after he finish his business.

[To show you mercy, I will give you sometime to think. you better made you mind as soon as possible and do tell me. if it take too long, I may be change my mind, you know?]

He said it bluntly and exit the room, leave the stunned Eleonora behind.

Then after a while,

[....I'm sorry... I'm sorry...everyone...I'm sorry, father...!!]

There are nothing that the girl can do but lie down on the bed, crying out and cover her face with her hand.

*

A sound was made again before the room that imprisoned princess,

It's Cristobal who went down the spiral staircase.

Unintentionally, he leaking a sigh.

It was a disappoint face for someone who gonna marry the renowned maiden of west land.

[...seriously, women know only weeping and cry. anyway, I liked it.]

[Your highness, If you bring out such a reason like that, there no way she gonna reject it.]

Cristobal twist his face in more displeasure at the unstoppable remark of Dorote who was outside the room.

[Hm, of course, it sure thing. they even dispatch my younger sister in order to reign over Kshyperuk. To not service this me is in-acceptable. however, you don't need make a fuss about care over that hindrance, you got that?]

Dorote had been harboring a worry feeling but it seem that the lord himself did not take it seriously, he leak a relief sigh secretly as long as he was not blame.

[By the way, this east territory seem to be busy a lot lately, Am I right? Deroteo.]

Another bitter thought is now rise up in Dorote, by Cristobal who changed the topic there.

Because it is a topic that he want to avoid the most and no desire for his lord to hear it.

However, he answered innocently.

[Yes, it is apparently that there was an unexpected experience fellows. we think about deal with it soon or later.]

[Hou, I thought that people in this country always lack a ball, so there still someone with the bone left? Oi, ...finally...a worthy prey....]

[You can't , sir!]

A restraint word just shot at Cristobal who's mood was slightly improve while hasten his walk down step.

[Your highness gonna need to lead a punitive expedition soon right? you can't do this no matter what, because you are our Jaroudeku's army supreme general. please leave such a trivial matter to us, you need to fulfill your role.]

Cristobal feel incredibly annoy and unexpected bored right away but he manage to stand it.

[then hurry up and get rid off such trivial thing!!]

while following Cristobal who haste his pace, Dorote revert his disturbed thought face to his original compose one as the usual behavior.

*

After split up with Cristobal, Dorote immediately summon his men.

This subordinates are all members of 2nd prince Cristobal's forces, soldiers who serve under Dorote's command for long time.

[...so that why, I always say we better clean up this mess early, because it gonna unavoidable caught his highness interest.]

With long relationship history with Dorote and Cristobal, they are all know well about his personality.

Easy to figure it out with just looking at him.

They are all unanimously wear a wry smile.

[I need to attain to his highness assistance role now, I leave this matter to you, "**Gustav**".]

A young man with tall and thin body stepped out among the men after received Dorote's word.

His strange dress was equipped with various large and small "**sword**" attached on numerous belt around his hip, he answered with his fist, a self confidence appearance.

[Ou! you can wait, Oldman! , leave it to us, because we are gonna make sure to stop it.]

That right, this man was adopted son of Dorote, "Gustav Marudones", assure him by hitting his chest.

The adopted father look at this really reassuring rough appearance with blank expression while leak a sneak laugh at the men groups.

This exchange interaction between parent and child is a usual event for them.

During such a dangerous calm, they were interrupted by the voice of third party.

[About that task, would you mind to let me take part in it too? is it fine?]

A firm voice of suddenly appear figure has bind everyone there.

Dorote narrowed his questioned eyes at the person who coming from darkness despite create the tension around the area.

[....You are... Sir Hietakannas.... "**Leader of copper fang knight**" right?, what in it for us?]

The person may be look outright suspicion attitude, however, she is Copper fang knight order's grand master, "**Gerhild Hietakannas**", look around everyone with natural gloss

smile.

ゲルヒルト>Geruhiruto> Gerhild * the heck how can they read “d”? I almost use Gerhilt.

[You guys don't need to be that vigilance, anyone who stand against our Jaroudeku' army are all our enemy equally. or you don't like if I lend a hand?]

[Although burrow outsider hand, I can only feel that trouble gonna increase. you can take part but only help us out. is that clear?]

[Judge from the fame Steel fang knight ability, It should be enough already right? we'll only search for that nasty death reaper for you.]

Dorote try gather his thought carefully in order to deal with the enemy and the purpose of Gerhilt.

The most troublesome problem would be pinpoint enemy position, So he take up the offer.

[Kukukuh, well then, I will go to dispatch my subordinate, you can expected a good news!]

Gerhilt walk away while leaving odious laughter like enigmatic snake behind. Gustav raise his voice against his adopted father with suspicious air while send her off with a glance.

[Old man, Is this fine with you?]

[...although this unexpected woman fox seem to be careless but her work can be trusted. what wrong with it? We only need to focus our task. Gustav, soon as you received report, go sortie at once.]

Gustav and the subordinates make a salute to Dorote. after a while, An airship that carried them depart from Raspedo Castle.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 31.3-31.4

Chapter 31 Part 3 & 4

Part 3.

The news had reached Silver Phoenix knights, It was happens during the preparation to sortie out as usual.

[...Is that an reliable information?]

[Yes, It probably some means to held down remnants of Kshyperuk, they too beginning to give a positive reply. further more, we already prepare a back up too. just in case.]

Blue Falcon Knight, “Nora Frykberg” answered Eru’s question with expressionless face as usual.

At the same time, The Blue Falcon knights came up with a their investigation result after entered the territory of ancient Kshyperuk.

[Understood, the situation has been change...this should be able to convey the young master.]

Eru immediately gathered all of knight members and tell them this important announcement that gonna effect their future.

[By the way, first thing before I want to inform everyone. Young master, there are good news and bad news. do you want to hear it both?]

[Hou, then let hear the good one first?]

Eru answer at came back negligent word while fully cheerful smiling.

[Then, let start off with the good news first, we found the place that appear to held out Martina-san and other royal family who survived.]

[....!! Is it true? Silver leader (Ernesti) !? For real?...really. so they were still alive...!!]

*Emurys already give Eru a nick name...

Emurys look back vigorously and swung up both of his arms as he barking toward to the sky. It not just only him, the wave of joy being widespread between members.

[If you knowing that much then, send out Silver Phoenix knights to rescue them right now!!]

[Please wait. I'm sorry to break you now despite high spirit, but you still need to hear the bad one before that. they are certainly alive....but apparently, the girls were in a little awkward situation.]

Emurys who has the downside about being hasty was restrain by Eru who explain the another information.

He start off with the royal family girl are imprisoned in Raspedo castle, then they gonna married off to Jarodeku's prince.

When he heard it, Emurys's reaction does not betray anyone expectation.

[Oh! I see, you gonna tell me that while they cause a mess by attack the national land, on the other hand, they now carelessly lay a hand on my cousin princess (Helena) too? then, let go and brutally murdered that idiot prince!]

Emurys's expression at that time filled with too rough voice and stand out almost like "Shura".

*a carnage fighting being.

His aunt, Martina is not only one that he worry about, there still include the duke princess Isadora, her daughter too. also his acquaintance, Eleonora (Helena).

By destroyed Kshyperuk kingdom, disturb a hedge between kingdom friendship. this already drive him in shaking rage state.

[This prince is truly idiot! To force a marry on woman, Unforgivable!]

[Yeah! That's right! such an insolent person, let go hang him!]



An angry reply emerges from the silver phoenix knights' women group, which particularly came from Ady and Helvi.

Because of that, more 3 members' arms swing up in great spirit.

The surrounding girl also rides a wave and takes part in it.

A laid-back voice of Eru from somewhere reaches their back, who jumps out now and now.

[Oh dear, oh dear, please do not be such a hurry. It's better to not move the knights right now.]

[What!!....then how can I'm going to rescue everyone!? don't tell you plan to only wait and continue to watch it like this!]

Then, Eru responds in order to calm down Emurys's approaching look, which really harbors many great worries right now.

[Her royal highness being held captive in Fontanie. that place location right now, is under the control of east strategic point Jaroudeku's force. in short, it is one of enemy's stronghold.]

[....Cheh, you're right, It's not easy for Silver Phoenix knights to march up there, right?]

Finally, blood in his head went down after recognizing the problem, calm has returned to Emurys.

If that was a enemy main base, then the allocation of forces that stationed in such highly value area must be not a joke.

In the past, Silver Phoenix knights gained victory, mainly rely on mobility of Tzendrinble and powerful silhouette knight like Ikaruga and Gordesleo.

But if the battlefield reduce to only one single horseman size then It would be overwhelming unfavorable fight for Silver Phoenix knight which accustomed to attack side.

[To give a example in word, It very noticeable if we move the entire knights. in the worst case, there also a risk that they will thrown out the princess group into the fray. after all, they did not only held out 1 person there. It will become a very difficult situation if we handle the hostage poorly. in other word, we need to rescue all of royal family who got imprisoned there before the enemy notice it.]

Emurys's eyebrows begin to wrinkle again.

He glad to know the location that imprisoned the royal family but there is no change the fact that they still in the hands of the enemy.

Helvi and Ady too, were put up an arm with chagrined look on their face.

[If that the case, while our knights fighting in this area, let's go steal only the royal members.]

[Correct, I also thought the same thing. by take advantage of the current state. given that we still don't have any casualties against Jarodeku's army. but there are a chance that they will increase more force in future in order to defeat our knights. that will be their attention. the main force of knight order is usually a silhouette knight, but we have another force as well... I will use silhouette gear.]

Unaware of Eru's expression, It was the same as child who came up with mischief idea. or it just look like a child who boast his favorite toy?

[While Enemy's eye focus on our main force knights, we sortie an infiltrate troop with the latest combat type silhouette gear, let go return freedom to the imprisoned princesses shall we?...Batson! now is the time for "**Shadow Rat**"(Covert type silhouette gear) come into play!]

[Oh, Ou!? you mean that thing right? if it that thing then it gonna be fine for sure!]

The panic Batson who under attack with with suddenly topic, confirmed it while look behind.

There was a different silhouette gear than the standard Motor Lift version, "Motor Ru-

beet” park on that place.

Next to it, Blue Falcon knight members nodded powerfully at Nora.

Finally, Emurys who keep listen to the talking Eru patiently spewing a word.

[Tsk, fuh fuh, fuh ha ha, ha hah ha hah ! Silver leader... you really are, kuh haha, Yosh! I like it! this plan! ku ku ku, In short, all of their effort gonna be wasted, right!?]

While Emurys who showed his wit, he began to move around everyone.

Ady move gently next to Batson, asked him.

[Hey, pigeon-kun, about thing that Eru-kun mentioned, It possible that I able to use it too-right?]

[Since we talk about Eru-kun’s work then it possible. may be, it really unlike you to ask.]

While Ady and Batson whispered and nodded at each other, the plan discussion progress swiftly to the summary.

As a leader, Eru distribute the strategy outline that he plotted to the members.

[The rescue team will be lead by me. also Ady and Chid, please participate in this mission too.]

[Yuck!? We too?]

Suddenly got called out, not only Ady but Chid too was full of surprise.

[If it were you two people, then you guys definitely able to pilot the Motor Ru-beet for sure, it was the same as piloting Tzendrinble. I need a minimum manpower to help transport and infiltrate.]

[I see...roger that, Eru-kun! let do our best and save the princess!]

[well, I guess it something like that.]

Ady swing up her fist forcefully than usual while Chid shrugged his shoulder and look down.

At that time, Emurys who listen at conversation quietly finally grab Eru head swiftly.

[Hey, Ernesti, I too will join the rescue team. I already giving a lot of thought and came to the conclusion. anyway, let do it.]

translator note : Seriously, you can think? I don't believed it. :D

Shaking his head vigorously to escape Emurys's grab, Eru can only sigh.

Emurys is hardly suitable for this conceal mission but anymore deny would be useless anyway.

[It fine you want to join the rescue team then...now, Edgard-san, Dee-san and Helvi-san, I give the important mission at all members of Silver Phoenix knights in addition.]

The squad captains who gathered in front of their grand master correct their posture.

They already know how story gonna turn out, their corps will become a bait to attract enemy attention.

A light of determination show on their facial expression.

In that imminent, Eru take out a bunch of paper from nowhere.

[In order to have everyone of Kshyperuk join the fight, This is a blueprint that I thought, a draft to strengthening their Leswant.]

[Eh!? just when do you did it?...Should I say as expected of you?]

While the squad captains surprise, they received a bundle of paper that look like important one.

Eru tightening his facial expression after being proudly attitude.

[With this in your hand, I want you to use it to wool every noble around the country. while we, the rescue team will safely rescue the royal, with that way, the king of this country will return. The battle from now on, It will be not only us who fight, they too, need to standing confront it together. this is a means for that.]

*bait and hook :D

A bundles of paper that hold in the hand of captains were feel more heavy after hearing such a line.

Another means for recapture strategy of Eru, the blueprint is now become a major key that gonna influence the future of this land.

[...seriously, you surely say it like something easy.]

[But, interesting. Anyway, I'm good when come to protect something. this blueprint, I will make sure to keep it safe and delivered it. I definitely let it blown off right on their face, those guy.]

The rest of members also happily swing up their arm after Edgar.

beside the rescue team, the destination of other two squads already been decided.

Silver Phoenix knights begin to move out fast like a storm but quietly.

[Fuhfuhfuh, a princess rescue strategy is it!? it sound good somehow right....Ahh but, for Eru as the one who come to rescue her, I'm feel a little bit jealous...]

[Stop talking non-sense, we're going because it's an important role, let go prepare our self quickly.]

During knights start moving, Chid casually grab Ady's collar who still in her's world. dragged, and leaving just like that.

Part 4.

On top of the empty vast sky in the east territory that draw out such gentle pattern, there was a black painted ship figure.

Sail with wind, advance thru the sky sedately.

Two "Airship", a secret weapons of Jaroudeku's army.

These ship leave Fontanie and march to the east, lead by the knight, Gustav.

[Ou ou, take it more seriously, don't sleep too much on the precious airship.]

The men look back at Gustav who speak while sitting on captain seat in good mood.

[Don't you think it is a bit over kill? the opponent is just merely formidable bandit.]

To mobilize this much of force against Kshyperuk's army, A hidden meaning word of his men.

Moreover, by no means, It not only his thought since no one gonna believe that an opponent which able match the entire Jaroudeku's army fleet really exist.

Gustav which heard that slightly smiling in amazed, he speak with a light tone immediately.

[In the end, just what is that reaper? we only know that it's enemy, but just how did it

disappear so fast! with our superior speed of airship here, we will strike after have it strand out! how was it? perfect right? If we do not deal with it quickly or take too much time, It definitely create a problem to Oldman.]

[Haha, that also right. after all, our real enemy is his highness patience itself. when compare to Kshyperuk's coward, he definitely much more worst one.]

While seeing off a man of subordinate who walk away while making people laugh, Gustav sit cross leg and elbow slovenly on captain seat.

[...Ah...ahhh. this is a missing feeling that I yern so far, such a poor straight dangerous one. rumors of reaper-san is noting but a rumor, Hey, I feel really awkward. after all, we're the one who gonna killed it.]

While he seem to be understand the problem, it should be noted that he was a fearless and full of self confidence.

The ship carrying this kind of person while heading straight to east.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 31.5-31.6

Chapter 31 Part 5 and 6.

Part 5.

It begins after the silhouette gear troops which led by Ernesti head out in order to rescue the princess for a while.

Silver Phoenix knight order which consists of 3 squads, now, only the first squad remain behind.

They were busy run around the east land of ancient Kshyperuk principality.

Tzendrinble from the third squad split a team to delivered the other two squads, they are the first squad, same the second squad in tow.

The main force purpose is to tell the noble in various place about “A strengthening Leswant draft”, and seek their cooperation.

For that purpose, they split up and scatter around for the best efficiency, but the circumstances did not go well and they only achieved a little bit.

Jaroudeku’s army began to take serious measures to search and hunt down their Grandmaster(Ernesti)’s silhouette knight.

Up until now, silhouette knight that assigned to their platoon usually strictly limited to 3 machines or less.

But now it escalates to 10 machines at the minimum, and they began to move several platoons at the same time.

On the contrary, this really a dangerous situation for Silver Phoenix knights which now missing its strongest card, the demon(Ikaruga).

[Quite something that does not allow us to take it lightly.]

[That right, rather being careless, we better keep vigilant like this.]

As a result, the main force tries to avoid combat situation as much as possible.

Fortunately, thank Jaroudeku’s army began to gather and concentrate their war potential in one place, the chance of contact reduce greatly.

On the contrary,

Once they were discovered, their chance of escape also zero.

The presence of their variant knight's teams now are no longer a rumor, but fully appear with an entity.

(TN: I guess in the past battle, they put some camouflage or robe on their knight to conceal their characteristic.)

[At any rate, giving a situation, with Tzendrinble's leg as our advantage. we should be able to manage it quickly before we come across an enemy.]

By horseback which pulling the second squad, Dietrich leaks a murmur.

Unfortunately, his wish did not come true.

Many numbers of the Tzendrinble unit which pull the wagon are stand out too much.

It was impossible to hide their full figure presence, the detected problem can happen during any time.

[...contact from "The around deer". We discovered "The gathering horse". release a "Hawk", continue to hunt...]

In the forest along the highway, The giant black knight lurking in the gloom.

It also erected slightly sound contrary to its massive size, Almost like a ghost presence, the centaur knights which ran on the highway would never notice its presence in the end.

Before long, the black knight giant begins to move gently, several soldiers ran away on horseback.

[...So It finally came out, I was really reluctant about this. It quite a problem in itself to taking it from that "Vixen'deed".]

Gustav stroking his chin on the cormorant Airship (Levitate ship), and ahead of his line of sight,

The number of abnormalities were running on the road through the woods.

[So that is the "reaper cavalry group". It looking too much friendly, somehow, It look like something mix with a horse! well, Let use it as a material to sharpen our's rust "Sword".]

It seems that the existence of variants horse-drawn carriage group that runs on the ground exceeded far beyond his expectation who also knew as a fearless man.

As something on the level to be reckoned and challenge his gut, he retakes his wit

immediately and starts issue his subordinates a command while got slightly upset.

While Gustav chasing the second squad of Silver Phoenix knight on the highway thru the sky.

At the same time, the second squad also aware the presence of flying ship looming on the empty sky from their side.

[What is that thing? Am I dreaming? A ship...is soaring thru the sky!]

[This is too much indescribable...to think that there was another person than our's Grandmaster, The person who build an object that out of common sense exist. as expected of west land, such a windfall.]

[Dietrich, This not the to impress there too much! What are you going to do now about that?]

The rest member of the second squad said that with intense, upset tone at the first look.

For speaking, they who do not know much about a magical beast that flies in the sky now witness an "Airship"(Levitate ship) that appeared for the first time for military use with air superiority power in this world.

Its presence is very confusing them.

Until now, due to the airship was treat as a valuable asset for Jaroudeku's army, it still not has been dispatched to the end of the east so far.

He is now in a really awkward situation.

[Truly, it really looks like a ship itself. Fuumu, that is... a sail, right? It's drawn out a Jaroudeku kingdom nation flag. Which means it's enemy, moreover, It chasing us thru the sky, Shall we greet them by shooting it down? since It seems to be faster than our leg here.]

Even they met an unprecedented flight weapons, they get over this matter quickly, It could not say because they are Silver Phoenix knights only but they already passed the day of earth shattered like it was a normal everyday event and get used to it in many bad ways. (TN: Since the head is already weird one, I guess it can't help that the entire knight order also mutated into weird direction too right? :D)

[Each unit, prepare to take action! begin deployment for "Add on shell"(Outer crust)!]

Jump on Dietrich's instruction, each machine begin to expand the armor plate that had been subsided to the wagon.

Add on shell is a platform structure of war horse-drawn carriage(Chariot) which equipped for solely combat purpose, a simple defense mechanism that added on the transport wagon.

A platform for an attack method that uses silhouette knight as a “Load”.

In order to reduce the necessary chariot’s function.

TN: think “Add on shell” as addition platform for hold silhouette knight while they doing a high-speed combat. by using silhouette knight weapon as a turret to defense the cargo wagon, with that way, they don’t need to waste time to develop another magic turret function of the wagon.

There, on clear area top of the wagon, Kardetolle holding up its back weapons while glared at the sky.

Take its position, aim and lock their reticle sight to the airship which is a black point reflected on their holo-monitor.

[...Victory to the first strike! Begin the attack!!]

The second squad that had been waiting while measuring the distance, under one command from their’s captain(Dietrich), began their fiercely direct attack at the approaching airship.

The approaching airship that hurried drops its attitude face the suddenly magical bullet from the ground.

For they who were too much arrogance and truly overlooking the opponent from high ground, The airship did not expect a sudden attack.

[Wow, look like the airship still intact? Here’s also return the favor, prepare the “Catapult”! contact the other ship, use pincer attack!]

Only one person, Gustav who did not get struck by the attack and calm down his subordinates.

The calm from the commander was transmitted to the subordinates.

While they are still panic a little bit, they shout a message of instruction to the speaking tube.

A wooden platform appears from the inside of narrow window which immediately opens from airship’s side, and take aim at the cloud of dust that running on the highway.

At the same time, the bow engine starts to make a fine-tuned sound.

The airship begins to loosen its speed.

While dodging the incoming magical bullet, Two airship vessels began to run in the parallel side and attain the position to sandwich the Silver Phoenix knights.

[This is too sweet to aim, loose it!]

A stone bullet jumps out one after another from small window along with a dull sound.

“Catapult” is tower placement that has a small sling on the airship.

It is a simple spring load mechanism that launches a stone bullet.

TN: At first, I thought it was a stone cannon because Catapult usually uses to throw a large rock but writer use 彈 instead of 砲, then would mean it not a large rock that we saw in the mid age war movie, the scale should be much smaller and less destruction power.

Originally, It does not hold a power to the extent that able to stop the silhouette knight.

However, It would be another story if use by the flying airship.

After all, flying airship boast the absolute advantage of the potential energy as addition factor.

Even a small powerless stone bullet, may have big destruction power by the time it reaches the ground.

Now, the flying stone bullet begins to cobble the road on the ground together with a roaring sound.

After the return attack, which is just a flying stone bullets came one after another, the Tzendrinble knight runners raise their panic voice.

[This is bad! Second squad! the road already in ruined, if we keep forward at this speed, We may end up trip somewhere!]

[It surely happen-ne... Each unit of the third squad, disconnect the wagon. After become free, enter to the forest, escape from the sling range!]

A rapid breaking sound occurred on the highway.

The detached wagon began to decelerate, sprinkled a furious cloud of dust and spark.

The second squad stand firms their machine, withstand the inertia that caused by sudden braking.

The winding up a cloud of dust which un-intended happen has played the role of

smokescreen, cover and conceal their figure from flying airship.

[Haha! try to act like insolent one?, you deadly wrong! all knights, power up! get under the ship, clad your “sword”!]

Gustav speaking while jump out of the bridge and head to the hanger in the opposite direction, his men followed after him hastily.

When the ship’s huge hull come closer to the land surface, in the meantime, Air wave of swirling wind blow away a cloud of dust on the highway.

Its rapid mobility moving appearance which makes an illusion that the ship almost fall.

Decelerate by using It sails which received the wind as driving force as an air brake, It lowered the height and advanced thru the addition trees and use it as a friction force.

The next moment, the bottom armor of flying airship open up in a big gap.

From the open hole, Black giant, Tyrantor which has been lifting by a crane come out one by one.

Black knights that landed on the highway cause a vibration and sound while its steel armor with a heavyweight scraping the land.

During deployment of black knights, The airship did not stop moving.

It took out the skim high trees along the highway with its crane and fly away while raising altitude and speed.

An airship is certainly a powerful weapon but, that only truth when it flies in the sky.

For the sake to deploy silhouette knight, it needs to drop its speed and lower the altitude which really creates a vulnerable moment.

Therefore, for an airship to reduce its speed and descent, and furthermore, performing the acrobatic move to drop silhouette knight.

Should say that the skill of this airship’s crew was too unreasonable and deserve a praise.

The bulky Tyrantor now line up on the highway.

In order to block the path of Silver Phoenix knight’s second squad, four platoons, lined up with a total number of 12 machines.

[Just when you thinking about the attack only came from Airship and then, Next one after that is black one came out, Our enemy really hurry-ne, the opponent is a familiar

Silhouette knight. now, our second squad surely in trouble.]

While raising Guyaledy from the wagon, Dietrich grumbled.

TN: グウエラリンデ >guuerarinde>Guyaledy , maybe, not sure , since it an improve version of Dietrich's Guyale.

Grasp the surrounding situation in his machine, divulge and sigh involuntarily.

The second squad and Tyrantor corp which now take a row-wall formation tactic are now head-on glare at each other.

Tyrantor which have the number closing the distance slowly.

Engulf its body with heavy plate plus a masterpiece output inside, when to combine it together really give them an intimidate pressure.

[I really want to avoid combat as much as possible but...look like a fire just fall on me, need to extinguish it first-ne.]

Dietrich drew a sword.

Magic Power Converter (Ether reactor) increase in power, pouring and building up magic power in the frame before the fight.

In the horizontal, Kardetollet which had been holding a weapon also emerge a considered red cross pattern on its frame.

[Plus, Edgar not here either, actually, just where the hell is he right now? This is really unpleasant, It was you guys that using the stolen technology from us who were overwrought arrogance one...]

Dietrich's depression strongly stirrup.

Guyaledy storing up energy that flexed its body.

Crystal tissue is drawn aside like a bowstring, the force accumulates impatiently and eagerly waiting for explosion timing.

[The price for your sin really expensive, you know?]

While Guyaledy vigorously gouges the land, it fledgling.

This is its attack method with explosion boost like an illusion.

The preparation process completes without delay.

The second squad's Kardetolle also imitate it, this is their team's specialized signature.

Their alias name, "The mix assault middle squad".

The name did not come due to a standoff hobby but came from their attack method which really the main core.

[Fuh, To head on crashing with this Tyrantor from the front. know your place!]

The knight runner gloated in the cockpit of the black knight.

For Tyrantor which boast its strong output and defensive power.

The battle from the front is just what they want.

In fact, They would emerge victorious even face a group of Leswant as the opponent by itself alone.

They imagined that the result would never change even the opponent is this "Grim reaper troops"

Tyrantor is also bracing itself from the front against thrust attack of Kardetolle.

Likewise, it also greets with an attack from the front too.

The armor that attached to the arm of the general machine equivalent to a shield with endurance.

A counter attack to deal with the attack already prepared

A metal mass collided with a momentum, resound a dull one.

Shouting a friction sound and spark scene.

There, Tyrantor's knight runner was taken by the unexpected thing that happens.

Kardetolle which really look like a general machine on the outside, but in fact, it was a state of the art machine that using strand crystal tissue and output that beyond its size.

The blow from its large sword squashed Tyrantor's arm armor part.

Furthermore, It even crushed the crystal tissue joint of under armor.

[Hah, impossible, against Tyrantor's armor!? This thing is completely different from Leswant!]

[Otto!, To survive the sword blow, such a unbelievable one, look like it really thick armor!]

Sprinkled a piece of crystal tissue, Tyrantor doddering back as it tries to get away from Kardetolle.

Witness Tyrantor heavy armor for the first time which really something beyond their expectation.

Originally, if the opponent is a duel-class monster, his sword would have the power to buried it easily.

[No matter how hard armor it is, there no way that it gonna be thicker than “Behemoth” armor!]

Both forces now already entangled battlefield in half way.

Dietrich also initiated full frontal assaulted.

He targets two Tyrantors that looming on the front.

For Jaroudeku’s army that has number advantage, he could not be allowed not to take at least two machines of the black knight at the same time.

How far that the squad captain role he intends need to play?

He smiled down a sarcastic one.

Not hesitate at reckless action behavior.

He starts up, “Magius jet thruster” which integral mounted on the armor of shoulder and hip– a “Secret Weapon” of Guyaledy

Only Guyaledy that equipped the same thruster equipment as Ikaruga, but have lower output and only use accelerate to the front.

Even so, it already enough a powerful trump card.

With dull, muffled explosion and injection sound, Guyaledy slightly extrudes from its original position.

When to complete its charge.

The knight runners of Tyrantor who misread the moving speed of the scarlet knight missed his chance for intercept due to sudden acceleration.

It may be slowing down before attacking.

Although they also wary that unexpected acceleration blaze as some kind of feint.

The two machine moving its leg, while thinking “How can it accelerate freely?”.

With obtained an overwhelming speed, Guyaledy runs up with the twin swords, took advantage of the imaginary first hand, wielded a sword and aiming at the head of Tyrantor.

Tyrantor lost its vision was in the unbearable state, It can't help but try to rotate itself for defense. and aimed blindly .

As expected of Dietrich, he slashing the two machines at its arm which covered with armor.

Next moment, Guyaledy start up its back weapon “Blade on the wind”(Kamasa), firing dislocate air bullet aiming at the Tyrantor as its current state.

While the heavy armor of Tyrantor which took a hit from close range escape damage, the armored arm got squashed and a shard of crystal scatter.

They were outwitted, and if it keeps up like this, they gonna be defeat.

While clenching in anger, Tyrantor's knight runner launch itself a forcible counterattack from the collapsed posture.

Even the power may be decreased, a machine that withstand a blow from the heavy-weight Tyrantor does not exist.

But Dietrich deal with it splendidly.

Gyaledy uses the burst of the air pressure itself alone, surpass more outside its originally speed range and thrust up, and withstand the counter blow.

The knight runner only echoing in anger when his heavy blow momentum stopped, he was thrown down on the ground.

Fallen on the cobbled road and stirred up the dust.

Before the strength of Tyrantor, it really hard to utilized the open gap that happens immediately after its attack.

But before The crimson Knight, that gap is too fatal one.

Immediately after that, a sound echoing with any lightning flickered, wrong, it's the twin sword with lightning convincing speed that had been pulling out as it deceit one eyes.

The Tyrantor's knight runner got startled and try to fall back before such a god killing move.

An object dancing in the air fell on the ground with a thud sound.

A huge arm that still holding a heavy sword, his Tyrantor was bisected, from the arm to the elbow.

He can't help but scream from behind, a frightened voice.

He hurried up to pull out the battle mace with the remaining left arm.

A sweet bleeding in his hand grip at the control stick, his heart beating too fast, a violently beat.

The arm of Tyrantor is covered in thick armor without any gap, to display a vivid slash to that extent , this is not something that you can do with just an extraordinary skill.

Until now, he always thought Tyrantor possess an invisible armor,

But now, he begins to see an appearance of the unreliable scarecrow dramatically.

[Just hurry up and get back! It's impossible for you. It's our turn, this "Sword" user!!]
TN: he use ore-tachi for call himself and his silhouette knight together.

Before Guyaledy can give a pursuit, A young lively male voice split along with jet black knight made an entrance and intervene it.

An another machine that did not lurk in the back of the black iron wall.

Its intervene attack force Guyaledy to fall back.

It begins to glare unpleasantly along with its sight line,

As a result, there was a machine with the appearance different from the Tyrantor stood there.

The enemy has the height of standard silhouette knight, also look older machine when took a glance at it.

But Dietrich looks at such quirky features of the machine more than that.

[W...what is that? Is that a "Sword"? wearing that many swords, what are you planning to do?]

Right, it is a “Sword” , carry many swords, a standard equipment for Silhouette knight, also equipped a little erratic equipment in front of the machine.

At the head, at the body, nothing present in the shoulder, at the arm, surround the waist, of course in the leg too, the whole body was full clad with various large and small sword.

Even call that “Full Sword” would not be a wrong in the summary,

A very strange silhouette knight stood there.

Dietrich becomes instinctively speechless despite during the fight.

[Hmm? How are you gonna handle this? It obviously right? the side that has more sword is stronger, The strongest “Sword”, It’s naturally right?]

[Um, I see, you are a fool is it?]

[You too also have a sword but it clearly not the enough as this “Swordsman” level, not my enemy!!]

With said, Silhouette knight which wearing a large amount of sword—“Swordsman” attack Guyaledy.

TN: At first, I did not realize that it was a Gustav silhouette knight’s name, pretty sure that he doesn’t have naming sense.

Dietrich returns his concentration and meet the attack with the wielding twin sword.

[Etto, this is quite a senseless joke, I want to go sleep! The response is rip-off too much, maybe!!]

The crimson knight’s twin sword clashed with the black knight sword.

Though the repeat of return slashing increase by a breath moment.

Both knight machines run at a dizzying pace.

They never stop their leg, aimed for moment to use powerful blow and try to seize the favorable position than the opponent.

The way of the fight of this two machines is similar in a sense.

They both give priority on the attack to extreme, in a word, they sharpening a consecutive attack type like a storm.

The momentum occurred violently, even the second squad are hesitated to intervene.

[This is rampage too much!]

Kardetolle can't forcibly get close and butt-in before a fiercely sword style battle.

Swordsman put a long sword away in quickness and begin to absorb magic, pulling out the dagger from before, look at the opponent and throwing it.

Despite that, the dagger flies with a formidable accuracy and hit the Kardetolle.

[Oi Oi, Do not interfere! Our great fighting restrict to a guy with sword only! You hear me?]

At that time, Swordsman left out an opening and Guyaledy did not miss that chance, release "Blade of the wind".

Swordsman dodging a sharp magic bullet in blade form but take a graze damage.

It goes around Guyaledy's side, turning into tornado movement, took up its sword in a single moment and oppose Guyaledy's sword, causing a spark between them.

When you think about it,

To dodge Guyaledy's counterattack plus together with Swordsman's dagger which threw over there, manage to do circle movement while entangling with long sword of Guyaledy and continue to dance around Dietrich's machine in the instant and stopped the sword which aimed at its vital position.

For opponents such as Swordsman who was holding a long sword and short sword , everything happens less than a minute,

The sword dancing resumed between close combat of both machines.

[Otto, forgive me, our "Sword" dance still not over yet,right? you have quite a "sword", red one!]

[You are really troublesome! trouble but very pleasant too!]

While the red knight & black knight rampage around in the middle of the battlefield, the swordplay continues to retaliate intensively.

Utilize a short gap timing, Swordsman aimed and throwing at Kardetolle around him.

The dagger flying around in the midst of melee fight is greatly disturb the concentration of Kardetolle, killing the second squad momentum precisely.

[Keep it up like Gustav! let push them up like this, That the way black knight(Tyrantor)

fight!]

While clashing, the black knight morale was renewed and ride the momentum that created by Swordsman.

For Kardetolle who possess the equal power, the enemy heavy armor is a threat.

[Heh, to get entangled with this sword.... I really look stupid, He strong! to mess around while fighting me... wrong, this is a mistake for me to “holding back”!!]

While vibrated twin sword, Dietrich did not wipe off his bitter feeling.

The only ruffian in captain rank, he and Guyaledy combination boast the strongest duo in the second squad.

The fact that he was stopped from seizing the victory also a proof of the enemy’s strength.

[Even so... it would be bad if we keep drag on the fight.]

Moreover, he begin to feel a slightly rounding in his machine movement.

The obvious reason is, by prolonging the battle will result in the decrease of magic saving amount (mana pool).

[Hahaha...your twin sword are slowing down!! what to do, what to do! sloppy handling sword like that, You are no match for us!]

Suddenly, Swordsman increases the pressure.

While handling the attack desperately, Dietrich was carrying another kind of doubt.

Swordsman fighting motion did “Not dull at all”.

The muscle tissue of Swordsman and Tyrantor should be slow down after keep up the melee combat like the reduced mana pool Guyaledy.

But the enemy’s movement did not look decline a little bit.

Especially a massive size of Tyrantor, it should consume a large amount of mana according to its body size.

It really not feel funny a little bit to guessing the mana pool for that size.

[Hah—h? Had you worn out already? well, It already fun enough. well then, I should wrap thing up now!]

The muscles tissue of Swordsman creaks intensely, leaking a sound to the surrounding. filling up with an unnatural force.

Against Guyaledy and Kardetolle which the movement got duller due to lack of magic.

Tide of the situation changing in an instant, the second squad had been forced into the corner.

[...certainly, we're at the disadvantage right now. I will admit it...but you guys did not forget something right?]

Dietrich's word did not lose a courage in such a situation, Gustav asked back with an eyebrow.

He just only acts bravely? Nope, He denies it.

He always obsession in transformation of the sword,
(TN: A sword fetish, A perverted swordsman....)

He tries to understand his enemy's word by merging sword together.

In his view, remembered his intensive swordplay and the raging fire of the crimson knight which rising in strength, It's useless, he not able to make a connection.

[...keh, I got it!]

The next moment when Gustav's thought arrive at the answer, it also too late, the game changer already arrived in that place.

Echoing out of the wood, there a sound of horseshoe full of weight.

After escaped the attack from Airship, Tzendrinble of the third squad come back to the battlefield.

[That horse did not only use for transportation? and there was a few of them! this is bad....]

One company (10 machines) of the second squad plus 5 Tzendrinble of the third squad in addition, now have the number than Gustav squad (12 machines), plus the fighting ability of centaur knight still unknown in addition, he could not maintain the current force ratio calculation.

Encouraged by the horseshoe, Guyaledy pouring its last remaining mana and taking the dealy stance.

The running sound of ether reactor with the maximum output, go punch through with

shrilly voice.

Their trump card return and now they don't need to holding back.

Gustav corps are slightly upset, they completely forgot about the horse and now Tzendrinble charge attack coming out from the woods.

The cavalry assault (lance charge) with a speed of 10 times possess a fatal destruction power to the black knight which already got damaged from battle with the second squad. (TN: I think it's 10 times of normal silhouette knight thrust power.)

Exactly 5 black knights went into total destruction after got run up by the centaur knight that charge at their flank, they all down to their knee.

[Na...this horse...too cheat! fuck this, How dare of you!!]

Gustav barking while trying to force back the fight but an unexpected situation that "benefits everyone" happens.

The black knight who was stranded by the charge attack caused a large explosion without any warning.

An instant reaction caught up everything in the explosion regardless friend or foe who was on the spot.

But this explosion does not have destruction power at all, rather, It causing a thick smoke around the surrounding which blinds the vision in few step range instead.

[A smoke...blindfold? such a nasty tactic! Fall back! We gonna crash at each other if being careless. get out of smoke first!]

Dietrich who lose the sight is wary about enemy's surprise attack, he falls back and strengthened his guard.

Experienced an unknown situation, he couldn't afford to be careless.

Same as the third squad, it takes a risk to keep Tzendrinble's rush while don't see anything ahead.

[What the hell is this...what happen?]

And, even Gustav also retreated while got puzzled himself too.

He never heard there was such a function on the black knight.

Because they were able to escape from centaur knight by this smoke, it was not a bad situation for him.

By retreated together, the distance between two armies was wider.

When he trying to seek the opportunity, a blowing gust came through behind Gustav.

The smoke that was lying on the battlefield went blow away in the wind.

[This is.... a flying ship! did it just come back!?]

The second squad takes caution for its attack.

Instead,

Before their eyes, there was an appearance of an airship which serves as a trump card for the Steel Wing knights.

The airship appeared with low altitude almost touch the tree on the highway, dropped a chain from the open hanger at its bottom.

The intention is obviousness, the surviving black knights and Swordsman grab the chain of a crane that hung down from the airship and soaring up in the sky.

while rise up, a voice came down from Swordsman.

[Tch! seem like we need to re-organize. Oi, You are a good sword holder, Red one, until we meet again in next war, you better not die!]

The airship takes the boarding silhouette knight inside, start to increase the speed and altitude with a loud voice of wind engine.

Of course, Dietrich did not have the intention to let it run away silently,

The second squad immediately release an attack and give a chase.

However, only a few shot manage to scratch the airship.

It was impossible to stop it with their current equipment.

[...so.....they escape?..quite an annoying. anyway, we can't really ignore that airship which is an effective weapon of the enemy. time to asked the grandmaster(Enesti), we need to prepare something about this.]

Dietrich muttered with frustration while send-off the leaving flying airship with a glance.

Part 6.

[...I see, this is your doing is it? just when the hell on earth you in charge!]

While leaving the place by riding on the airship, Gustav asked the person who sat on the captain seat with moody tone.

[Well, before the departure, this is just a little favor, don't you agree? this is my job too, isn't?]

Gerhild who sedately sitting in the captain seat answered with odious tone to his question.

His game got interrupted, Gustav is angry.

But by the girl's interfere trick, they had escaped the predicament which was the fact.

[I will say thank....only this time, but do remember, there is no second chance.]

After only left a word with little thought, he heads to the hanger to see his subordinates condition.

While sending off his back, Gerhild floated a deep smile.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 32.1

Chapter 32 Part 1.

Hmnn.... An Exo-suit arc...

Part 1.

“Fontanie”city, the home base of Jaroudeku kingdom’s army east strategic point division.

Originally, it was a capital city of Fernando dukedom, a place that flourished as the part of trade route leading from the east-west highway.

There is a compartment zone in the corner of the city that had been constructed by the poised merchant.

In the past, It was daily basis crowded with a lot of people who were coming and going.

But now, the former prosperity has gone after the city fall in the hand of Jaroudeku kingdom, it is completely quiet.

The thing that had appeared in this place instead was a Tyrantor, Jaroudeku’s army silhouette knight.

The black giant stands regards at such a town corner, sweep its crystal eye a vacant gaze, dominated every people who walk down the road with its sharp look.

[...When I came to this city at the first time, it was a hard time because there was too many people move on the road. then, what with this plight state? ...for the town that used to be overflowing with lively...]

Avoid the black knight’s line of sight, the man with merchant cloth grumble while walking down the street corner.

If look at him closely, he doesn’t look like a trader with the profession at all.

Leaving with trotting pace while avoiding the public gaze of the resident.

[I see, It seem like Jaroudeku kingdom is rushing stabilize this occupied area, but with this current state, they rather kind of missed a good taste, right?]

TN: Lacking of management skill.

A petite boy who looks like a nobleman manservant was wearing a low over one’s eye currently walking next to him and give a supportive response.

The man kept his disappointed appearance while walking to the back of the street.

They proceeding to the low popular road and arrived at the old abandoned warehouse at the street corner.

[God grief, avoiding the public gaze is certainly inconvenient.]

The man with merchant appearance throw off his jacket and plunk sit down. disguised with leathery and hairstyle, Emurys, the second prince of Fremmevir kingdom was there.

Without a doubt, the one who wears a small dress is Ernesti.

They are boldly disguised as the merchant of “Silver Firm”, sneaking in Fontanie.

To tell the truth, It is really not much meaningful cover since the economy of Fontanie is in a state of confusion.

[For now, I roughly understand the state of city and able to grasp the surrounding state of our objective, Raspedo castle.]

[Just leave it to the guide when it needs since this one already burned mostly geography of this town in the head. it was a common knowledge! ...then, how about it, shouldn't we moving soon?]

Then, Emurys turn his line of sight to the back of the warehouse.

This warehouse that previously owned by a merchant is quite a large stores in its own way, It has enough space.

It got deserted after clear out its goods but now a large systemic armor painted with dark green color had been arranged in a row instead.

They are disguised as a silver firm's “commodities”, in the crowded box shape.

[As your command, the old silhouette gear (Motor beat) of your grandmaster excellency, under “re-modification” of our Blue Falcon knights. now, it's all covert specializes purpose silhouette gear. one platoon with twelve units in totals]

In the first place, the dark green silhouette gear here and there, “Shadow Rat” is a special silhouette gear that has been created for castle hawk knights sake which mainly focuses on intelligence activities.

TN: they certainly use “shiro taka” (castle falcon) not “aitaka”(blue falcon)

The one came up with this idea was Nora who was dispatched to silver phoenix knights as a liaison officer.

She witnesses the success of silver phoenix knights operation with silhouette gear and came up with a conviction that it has its own “professional”.

The new weapon silhouette gear had the capability to provide covert support for those who are responsible for gathering intelligence such as Blue falcon knight.

That is “skilled in maneuverability, quiet while demonstrating a better large power output”.

The difference between silhouette knight and silhouette gear mainly focus on the presence or absence of ether reactor than its different size.

At first look, it seems to be a disadvantage that there is no furnace, but actually, it was an advantage.

After all, ether reactor is something accompanied by a considerable noise in its operation.

For covert type silhouette knight that has been designed so far,

The internal mechanism that oppressed by the mechanism of suppressing the noise has set a major drawback extremely to a combat capability.

Silhouette gear doesn't have such a problem.

In the first place,

Silhouette gear is much less combat capability compared to silhouette knight.

However, silhouette gear warfare can be said that it was a deadly force for flesh and blood enemy.

It was the best choice for Blue falcon knight with its interpersonal mission.

Such a history gave a birth to Shadow Rat, now, as the core of this strategy, its ability is what it need.

[Then, everyone.... we will begin Kshyperuk royal rescue operation after today' sunset.]

Received Eru's instruction, everyone slowly nodded.

The operation of special forces that utilized silhouette gear for the first time in this world, begun to move.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 32.10-32.11

Chapter 32 Part 10&11

Finally completed a chapter and an arc...

Part 10

The ancient Kshyperuk kingdom capital, Dell Van Cool.

After the end of King Agusty's duel, this city had turned into the biggest military base of Jaroudeku invasion force.

TN: gonna change King's name from Akatsuki to Agusty

The current progress of invasion of Kshyperuk kingdom almost nearly complete as they took control over the royal castle in the center of the capital that belong to the Kshyperuk kingdom in the center of the capital.

One airship was fly under a clear sky and arriving at Dell Van Cool.

It takes a landing at the "Air Field" that being built in Dell Van Cool after the owner of this city has changed.

The place is just a simple leveling bare ground, make it easy to land and take off, it being used a lot by the airship as this was a Jaroudeku's army base.

Now, one airship is on verge of landing, it tries to find a vacant place to land.

Then, after a while, at the "Audience Chamber" in the middle of the royal castle, the relic that once belongs to the royal, a displeasure voice of Cristobal Hasslo Jaroudeku, The second prince of Jaroudeku kingdom, was echoed.

[What did you say?...the princess...was taken away!?!]

He went trembling in rage and risen up, as soon as he kicks up the throne that belongs to the Kshyperuk king, one man knee down.

Dorotea Mardones, who served as the right arm of Cristobal, his confidant subordinate.

He was immediately summoned as soon as he arrived in this city via the previous flight airship.

[Dorote...A man such as your caliber should know how valuable that princess is!! and you allow the thief to take her away, got the airship destroyed and nonchalantly fled back with the remaining black knight? What kind of the heck of blunder is this? Hahhh!!]

The roar unleashed by Cristobal is re-sound into the room again.

While receiving a single-mindedly fly out rebuke one after another, Dorote did not attempt to refute and still keep his knee down like that.

[Would you wake up already? Cris. how long are you gonna keep this up? for the supreme commander to be distraught as this degree.]

A cool voice came from the entrance between the audience reached the frenzy Cristobal.

The first princess Catalina, Cristobal's sister stood there.

[Elder sister....but!]

[Calm down a bit. you should be the best person who knew about sir Mardones's ability and his loyalty, right? it would be a waste of time to keep blame him like that. the first thing that we need to do is thinking about what happen next.]

By received a cool pointed out guidance, Cristobal finally feels like to let it go and calm his mind somehow with a deep breath, He just looks calm on the surface and turns to Dorote.

[...raise your face, first, what happen? tell me everything without leaving any small detail. I will think about your punishment after that.]

[Haa!]

Dorote finally rises his face up, however, he still kneeling while groaning told him about thief attacking the Raspedo castle.

[...then, by the time that I noticed it, all members royal family of Kshyperuk was already taken away. I am unworthy of your trust and don't have any excuse on this matter, I already prepare to receive your punishment.]

While listening, Cristobal's expression had been filled with bitterness.

For them, the princess among the royalty of Kshyperuk, Elleonora is a necessary "Tool" in order to stable their govern over Kshyperuk territory.

The current power that Jaroudeku kingdom possess already overwhelming, It does not require any extra effort in order to dominate and get Kshyperuk territory under its control.

[To think that it not only the princess but the other royal members too? Unbelievable, for you to got defeated by such a weakling enemy as Kshyperuk soldiers...]

While Cristobal had been examined the word of calm Dorote, he suddenly felt that something wrong.

He knew Dorote for a long time.

Somehow, it was like a senior-junior relationship, Dorote was always called the hand of Jaroudeku's army, some even called him the maker.

It would be a more logical reason if Kshyperuk's soldiers were the one who being hunted down, He unable to find an answer.

Catalina who sinking in her thought while stood beside him also had a similar idea, She looks up.

[You...are right. even the castle was attacked by 1000 men of Kshyperuk's soldiers, It still impossible for them to take away the royal family that guarded by Dorote. If that the case, does that mean the one who behind this should be...a soldier from "A different country" , right?]

[Damn you, so that what it is about! Tch, although, I thought that someone may make a move. to got an extra interrupted at the endgame!]

Cristobal growing in bitter look while listening to his elder sister's word.

They had reached the conclusion, a very nasty possibility.

If you take away the royal family. then, the nobles in the old Kshyperuk is not a small problem.

A simple story but also troublesome let just say that they just need to conquer them again with their war potential.

However, if another country is the one who caused this then the story become more complex.

After all, It will interfere via "The greatest righteous person" of the royal family.

Nothing but a trouble.

They also considered about interference from the other countries beforehand and already prepare a countermeasure.

Since Jaroudeku kingdom had been carefully prepared for a long time for their invasion.

But this event was quickly fully exceeded their expectation different from the early correspondence from other countries until now.

[...It understandable that “The isolated country”(Elves Flags) lay a hand in this matter or there still a remnant of Rokard Coalition?]

Catalina shooked her head at Cristobal’s murmured, it none of them.

[The problem is, we already spreading the news about Elleonora’s marriage in order to subdue Kshyperuk’s nobles. now, they were taken away soon after this happen, Our reputation is totally ruined.]

Deep wrinkles appearing on Catalina’s neat facial due to her irritation.

This is a great unpleasant development for the girl who was placed as a political assistant.

Dorote who still manage to keep his head on the neck until now is breaking into their conversation

[Allow me humbly to say. I do not think them are involved in this matter.]

[Hou? I guess you have a reason for that statement, right?]

Though he was being doubted, he still encourages to continue his story.

However, before Dorote speaking again, he leisurely removes his sword from his hip and hands it over to Cristobal.

[...this is, what the heck is it! what is it for?]

[There is no any single bit of falsehood in my earlier report. but, if you doubted in my word from now then...please behead me with this sword immediately.]

Cristobal grinding his teeth out of vexation at that word while Catalina lifting her eyebrows.

In another word, Dorote declared to betting his life with his word.

When you reverse thinking, his word could mean...

[To go that far, the story that hard to be believable was truth?]

Dorote did not reply but continues telling his story while kneeling silently.

Cristobal receives a sword after he thought for a while and immediately unsheath it.

It is a clunky white blade but well kept one that reflecting a dull light.

[Fuh, I guess it still not too late to doubt your word. but, I had received your resolve. speak without any regret!]

[I am grateful and happy at your benevolence, You highness...then, after the royal family escaped, We had to chase them with an airship...the enemy was used a silhouette knight that the upper body is a human but the lower body is in horse figure, they used it to flee on the highway.]

Cristobal involuntarily swallowed the word “It can’t be” , He takes a deep breath.

As he speaking now, Dorote neck is accompanied by a drawn sword that Cristobal hold.

The story was unbelievable enough to make him hesitate since Cristobal was not a stupid person.

[You really do a good job by risking your neck, what is this thing about? rather, Is it not a simple “Magical Beast” that gone into extinction since the old time?]

[With all due respect, it definitely a silhouette knight that clearly made by a human hand. my lord. It has an extraordinary speed exactly as a cavalry horse, without an airship, we probably wouldn’t able to hold a candle to catch up with it.]

Cristobal eyebrows shrinking.

Their mass production machine, Tyrantor is a machine that boasts power both in an offensive and defensive, the only drawback was its slow speed via the foot.

An enemy with such a feature like a cavalry would be their bad compatibility.

The story until now was a grave matter but Dorote’s story after this gonna be an earth-shattering report.

[The enemy did not only just have that. in order to retake the royal family, we attempt to chase it by airship. therefore, They even brought out a demon clad in flame with multiple arms. such an enemy able “jumped up in the sky”, it was a powerful silhouette knight that I never see anywhere before that able to destroyed our flying airship with just its weapon...]

[...what an innovation, Oi, Wait a bit, Wait, Dorote, You, what are you talking about!?!]

Cristobal was in his mid-thought while hearing Dorote’s report, he notices a ridiculous fact and begins to inquire it in a hurry.

[Of course, it about enemy’s silhouette knight. after all, we did not descent “Down” even once. That guy just flew from the opposite direction, wrecked us, my airship with only one machine. moreover, its blow strong enough to shake the black knight. so, I was forced to

give up on the pursuit...If you are doubted and think that I made a prevarication, please use that sword to....]

[Arghhh... You are so dull, that thing does not matter anymore. however, such a story... but, it just sound like an imagination]

Cristobal indeed leaked a groaning voice.

There is no any lie in the report that risked with Dorote's life.

They have completely discarded the thought to blame him.

Catalina was aware such a fact besides Cristobal who was still in confusion.

[...in alternate meaning, there was a silhouette knight that powerful than the black knight. rather, it was a completely another level. then it must be a country with technical capability. Hey, Dorote, by any chance, did you thinking about "A country that successfully develops new technology" not "A country that already possesses the technology a time ago"?]

Dorote assent replies back to his murmur question that lack of conviction.

[Although this is just my speculation, there is a duchess of archduke Ferdinan, the formerly younger brother of the king among the royal family that escaped, Martina Ortho Kshperuk...that women came from "Fremmevir kingdom" to married him. Furthermore, the direction that they fled to is also "East". the same direction to that country.]

[The "Country of Magical Beast"(Fremmevir)? Did you mean that a person from that bumpkin country may butt in this matter?]

They had been expected many of enemy but Fremmevir kingdom is the one that unexpected for them.

The reason due to that country is placed outside the west countries group (Okushiden).

There is only once that they only dabble interact with it as an opponent, after that, it far out of their interest.

[This may be some of their comrade agreement, they may probably try to skim some of Kshyperuk territory. The main problem is now, the royal family who escaped already join force with an enemy that powerful than the black knight. I don't think they have a lot of numbers but we can't be too much optimism.]

Catalina makes sure to make an adjustment to their strategy that already been planned.

Although the identity was guessed out, how much it gonna effect their plan in the future is

still unknown.

For now, it already too late for their Kshyperuk territory unification plan.

Cristobal who heard this turn made a rough snort and plunk sit down on the throne.

His state filled with many emotion but the anger never floating in his face.

[...kukuh hahahah, Isn't thing become more interesting a bit? An enemy that stronger than black knight! is now backing up the Kshyperuk, there is no more any pleasure than beating it. look like I will not get bored for a while.]

Catalina clearly frowns behind him.

It was well known in her royal family that her brother trait is about violent and war, he always asking for "An enemy to be crushed"

It was his bad habit.

[Cris, you better not make light of the current situation.]

[I knew, Elder sister, I will lead the army directly to crush the enemy. war is my specialty, I will ask you to look after the rear.]

Cristobal stood up vigorously as the beast that loses its chain.

Even after becoming the supreme commander of the invasion army, his nature never changed.

For Catalina who was bestowed with a political authority is hard for her to suppress him when it comes to fighting.

[I will carry out an attack on the east territory as soon as possible, we must choke their life out of it. if we waste too much time, the royal family will launch their counter attack for sure. It wouldn't be a funny story if the resistance spreading out because of it.]

Even he say about the disadvantage, his expression filled with lively and shining.

Since the situation progress to this point, it already inevitable too late to recapture the royal family.

The royal family will act as a center of this country resistance force.

In vice versa, If you took them out, the collapsing rate of Kshyperuk kingdom will be accelerated.

[Tool should always stay as a tool and get obedient used. resistance is a crime and needs to be redeemed with their life including the bumpkin company that came from beyond the mountains.]

Crush the plan of revival and resistance of the adversary.

that's his supremacy pleasure.

While he being sunk in his expectations, Dorote's word pressing him.

[Please wait a moment, the black knight that stationed in the eastern part was now greatly reduced in number. this proves how much strong of the enemy is and how much trouble we have now.]

The results of Silver Phoenix knights rampage.

Now, Jaroudeku kingdom enforcement is cut apart, the available force becomes less and less.

It doesn't take much time for Cristobal's mood being to swoop and falling to the ground, Catalina interrupted at that moment.

[Crish, Let re-assign the soldiers from the Black Jaw knights that stationed in the north and south, also calling the original force of Kshyperuk. Although, it inferior to the black knight, it still a silhouette knight.]

[That useless thing... however, look like I had no choice since we need an extra number in order to put an end on their breath.]

Cristobal tired and re-sitting on the throne.

With all of that, Jaroudeku kingdom course of action was settled.

The order was dispatch to a various area in Kshyperuk immediately in order to get the Black Jaw knight—an elite of Jaroudeku's army as a reinforcement.

It begun to move with an aim at the eastern sector followed the Kshyperuk royal.

It starts to narrow the target area and gradually become a siege.

Part 11.

Dorote walked away from the audience chamber after he finished his report.

His pace filled with a heavy weight, the answer is clearly.

He committed a grave blunder that can't be wipe out with time and effort, it's unforgivable for him.

[...Oldman.]

[Gustav, I heard it, look like you failed too.]

He was disheartened to get greeted by his adopted son, Gustav.

Gustav too was received a major damage from Silver Phoenix knights, now, both parent and child were in the same boat.

[I'm sorry. it went pretty bad. so, what did his royal highness saying? a good scolding?]

[Look like I need to stay still for a while and refrain from speaking unless it necessary depends on the time.]

Dorote leaks a sigh when he sitting on the chair with a screeching sound of GISHIRI.
TN: ギシリ SFX sound.

He says it clearly that his punishment has been postponed.

It was an unexpected blunder.

When he thinking about his punishment in the future, It really an unbearable pain for the excellent commander.

As a result rather than got executed from the eastern part failure, he was put on house arrest instead.

[The enemy that fought with us, is quite strong. It can't be compared to Kshyperuk goons, now, it is the time that our sword are necessary the most.]

[Endure it for now.surely, I will wipe out this stigma with their lives, they must pay, especially the demon there.]

The appearance of the incarnation of destruction crossing his mind.

It gonna be a big calamity presence for any Jaroudeku kingdom's soldiers.

Dorote never doubts in this premonition.

He decided to use even his own life that lives until now for a long time.

When their depression aligned, his subordinate come tells him about the unexpected visitor.

[excuse me for an absence. sir Mardones, can you spare me a little bit of your time?]

[So...it was sir Cruz. sure, but for a man who should hole up in the home country, what are you doing in this front line area?]

Dorote answering him, Horacio Cruz, the head of Jaroudeku development workshop, while inclining his head with a doubt.

He is not a combat personal. so, there must be a reason for coming to the forefront like Kshyperuk territory that he did not know.

[No, no, this is not a big deal, I just want to use this incompetence body of mine to help his highness majesty. in order to overcome the constantly new challenge, I want to hear the thought about implementation from everyone.]

From the knight runner commander view of Dorote, he always does not understand the thinking concept of technical personal but he sincere think it has own way of thinking.

Since he now has a lot of free time due to house arrest.

He nodded and accepted the offer.

[Such that thing, but we did not cooperate with each other much. what do you want to talk about?]

At that moment, Horacio's expression filled with a burning smile.

A muddy sticky vocal leaked from his opened mouth.

[....I heard that there is an enemy when you are using the airship, please carefully tell me about its appearance at that time with full detail...]

At that time, Horio's figure before Dorote's eyes turns into a different person that he met so far.

It was the one that makes he felt a disgusting spirit and passion.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 32.2

Chapter 32 Part 2.

Indeed a jail breaking event. >_<

Part 2.

The town of Fontanie went into slumber shortly after day fall.

The appearance of energetic merchants went soured and head back to their resident early due to the intimidate appearance of Tyrantor.

The remaining is nothing but a deadly silence and just a footsteps sound of the giants that occasionally break it.

While playing a faintly sound of driving the crystal tissue, The Tyrantor stand patrolling and look around with its crystal eyeball which is a visual device of silhouette knight but it did not mean that it can see thru the darkness.

For that reason, A torches have been placed here and there all of the street corner.

Without any person figure among the wavering light, the black knight kept walking slowly.

But that was a big mistake.

There are shadows galloping on the roof of the building connected to the Fontanie city without any sound making.

The one machine that advance to the top painted with dark blue tone.

Silhouette gear “Motor Beat”– by utilized this craft, Silver Phoenix knights leader, Ernesti. Chid also Ady, all rode on the Motor Beat, chasing Emurys who riding on the Shadow Rat.

Apart of them are Blue Falcon knights who went over without a sound.

Under the dim moonlight, they have been turning into a literal shadow.

A steel skeleton frame supports the whole body, by uplifting the crystal muscle that connects to its limb, it keeps repeat leaping from building to the buiding.

The shadows group had continued ran without shaking also looking around.

To move the silhouette gear's arm and leg, there is a need to energy supply with mana of the pilot themselves.

Now looking at their pace, while running at full power, there is no a trace of slowing down or lack in motion which prove that all members here are considerably familiar with silhouette gear.

Before long, they ran through the city and arrived at the center of the town.

The robust towering walls that surrounded by a moat, the former royal castle, Raspedo castle. stood before their sight.

[...by our spies information, the royal family is held captive in the four sides standing spire of Raspedo castle. the uppermost part had become a prison, it appears that they were imprisoned there. out of the four spire, I do not know whether they contain anymore personal. because to hit all at once will consume our entire division hand.]

Child who next to Eru along with Ady and Emurys lined up with their silhouette gear. each one of them will lead the divided platoon.

[Our most priority goal, is to successfully ensure the safety of royal custody. deal with anyone who stand in our way...but not necessary to entirely eliminated them. be quiet, be quick, please do it safely... then, let's go!]

Received the signal from the grandmaster, the shadows divided into four directions and fledgling without a sound.

Both Tyrantor and soldiers were placed on the surrounded wall of Raspedo castle as the security team.

But none of them aware the existence of silhouette gear that running in the dark night.

It would be cruel to blame them since the numbers of the black knight that guard the Raspedo castle are less than the numbers of Fontanie city' patrolling guard.

No one would expect such a bold enemy that coming all the way here to sneak in the home territory of Jaroudeku's army.

Silhouette gear that jumped out of the city took advantage of blind spot that darkness created with a flying momentum, rush over the moat with a directly jumped into the air.

An arrowhead fly upright while making a sound faintly from the arm's portion.

Drive by an atmosphere's explosion that caused by the magic phenomenon, the flying arrowhead is connected with a silver wire.

It was an equipment called a wire anchor.

The tip of arrowhead changing form into sharp scissor, reach and fixed itself with the wall.

As it became a reference point,

The silhouette gear acted as a cornerstone of the pendulum while jump over the moat in the area, one after another keep going and clung to the sheer wall.

Silhouette gear is a machine that strengthens a human movement with the power of crystal tissue.

Because it utilizing the strand crystal tissue that particularly strong output, it even possible to exert a force that greater than a monster that same size as human or horse.

Assuming a moat as an obstacle to silhouette knight, it had been rendered into a meaningless before this new weapon.

Silhouette gear that clung to the walls examine its surrounding state and stretched a large limb.

The tip of Shadow Rat's five fingers fitted with a sharp blade.

While hooked on the ledge on the wall, they began to climb the walls while displaying a surprising dexterity.

The walls are high up to 30 meters, exceed the height of silhouette knight itself.

The shadows reached and enter the top without any difficulty.

There was a sentry patrolling on the walls.

For Jaroudeku's army occupied Fontanie city without any much commotion.

The soldiers on sentry duty already lack vigilant and a restless one, they are already seen in a vivid plight state from their appearance.

His ear picked up a distraction, a sound like wind flows up from somewhere.

He halted and check around with a torch in his hand, light up the area, nothing abnormal.

While inspecting the surrounding not too long, he shrugged, turn his torch back to the previous direction and resumes his patrolling—A shrill rotation sound echo again, a dull

sound kicking the stone walls.

During the time he turns the torch toward the sound, someone just popping out of the shadow.

the stick out blade painted with a matte black color, the shadow also stood against him without any sound.

The guard's death was confirmed with the very torch dropping on the ground, the shadow throws away the corpse.

Not only just him, the other sentries who were on the wall are quickly eliminated by the shadow that appeared one after another.

[No remaining enemy around.]

[From now on, we have to race against the time, let run through it at once!]

Eru's motor beat overlooking the courtyard from the walls.

Compared the wall's stringency with the city's monitoring, look like the inside was the negligent one.

Also less torch here.

There is still a much dark spot in the garden.

Seen it quickly, he casually jump out beyond the edges of the walls.

The shadows dancing into the air from the top of the walls of formidable height that surpass silhouette knight many times.

Motor beat should get inevitable destructed.

By no mean, he is not an extraordinary person.

While motor beat was on the verge touching the ground, it was displayed the magic phenomenon at its protruding hand.

Collecting the air and create a cushion with the magic "Air Suspension".

By relief all impact from the fall, the motor beat landed in the courtyard quietly.

Followed it, a shadow figure has been falling one after another.

The limb of Shadow Rat made from a special structure, wrapped with a powerful strand

type crystal tissue joint that divided into many stages.

It can be move flexibly in order to absorb the shock and incidentally suppress the sound at the same time.

Shadow Rat fell and take up a beast like movement, slide into the safe landing.

Although there was a guard in the courtyard, they were not aware of all shadows in the least.

A decent size shadows perfectly hide in many darkness spots and because they do it almost silently , their presence is really significantly small one.

There also a limit to the guard's attention.

In the end, there were a lot of soldiers in the castle.

But none of them manage to notice the presence of intruders.

As they let their guard down in the castle due to their strict security control over the city.

More than anything, the silhouette gear is kept lurking in the unknown blind spot which makes all of this possible despite the difficulty.

They ran through the darkness without leaking even a slightly sound, soon they will scattering and reached to the base of the destination steeple that placed on all directions of Raspedo castle.

[...This is the place right?]

Eru looked up at the towering spire and fire the wire anchor far above on him.

After he checked the fixed resistance, he launched himself flying with the hoisting wire on the outer wall of the tower with a momentum.

Soon, the Shadow Rat followed him.

Because this place imprisoned the royal family of the ancient Kshyperuk principality, a very important presence, the exceptionally strong security had been placed at the steeple.

They kept the focus on the bottom stairs that allow people to up and down but none on the above top and its vicinity.

Who gonna thought that there are people who able to rise up on the towering that higher that the wall itself by climbing it?

Even start climbing from the poor outer wall as a starting point, it still difficult even that person already gained a considerable training.

Moreover, even somebody manage to reach the top, there is no such a doorway. there is only just a small enhance fitted window that human can't pass.

Unfortunately, such a logic and common sense don't apply on silhouette gear.

The motor beat that reached the top, implanted its wire anchor solidly on the wall and constantly destroyed the surrounding of said window with its powerful muscle strength.

Abandon the conceal activity, it destroyed the stone walls, entering into a huge systemic reinforce room.

[...For forcibly breaking into women's room on such a midnight...it's enough to call a culpable one, just who on earth are you?]

A quiet challenge greeting came faster than Eru can even look around.

When he turned at the sound origin, at a dim room place with just only a lamplit.

Young blooming aged women sat on the chair there with one book in her hand.

TN: 妙齡 eternal seventeen....again? if K&M gone into anime adaptation, I highly hope that Kikuko Inoue will cast Martina's roles. just how old is Martina??? another young mother...

[Since the location is such a place, some of the irreverent should be pardoned sometimes, it can't be helped right? Are you the grand duchess Martina?]

[You are indeed right. Still, I yet to heard your reply from the previous question?]

This woman is indeed, "Martina Orto Kshyperuk"—who married to the former Fernando duke.

Basically, she is Emurys's aunt.

Eru nodded, take out the emblem from his bosom and quickly form a small bow.

What engraved there is the nation flag of Fremmevir kingdom with silver phoenix appearance at its surrounding.

Martina who keeps composed until now reveals her surprise for the first time.

[...that proof. did you received from brother's hand?]

[At your will, I will be brief since the situation has been imminent. We, the servants of

Emurys highness came in order to rescue you royalty.]

A sound of lock removing can be heard from the entrance of the room.

The soldiers indeed perceive an abnormal and began to inspect it.

[...seriously, that fool....to a place like this! fine, as you state, I will trust you. but this place still caught the royal highness princess and my daughter. I will not run away alone!]

[We're aware of that, please be assured. the other personal already heading toward the other place same as this place, because we already planned to extract you all at once.]

Martina only has a little time to nominal thinking.

Soon she closed the book and throw it wildly.

TN: lol....poor book.

[Good, then there is no reason to hole up in a cramped place like this, could you show me the way, cute knight-kun?]

TN: even Martina who was an eternal seventeen women called Eru “可愛い” (kawaii), I guess his charm work at all female age range. as a girl stuffed toy...

[At your will, the escaping may be a little rough, therefore I like to beg you a pardon.]

[Haha! just quickly breaking out clearly under their nose directly! isn't that good?]

Eru re-enter the motor beat while made a wry smile, he really want to protest against the decision like aunt like nephew of her.

He moved its huge arm and embracing Martina.

[If that the case then, I will escort you out...for sure!]

By his word, they came dancing out of the large hole without any hesitation.

[What on earth is that sound?]

Immediately after this, the soldiers who opened the door wildly got crowded collapsed.

They put up a lot of locking mechanism to prevent the royal family escape but now it becomes their hindrance instead.

The soldier depressing, when they entered, the room already become completely empty, only a cold air that flowing thru the broken window from outside remain behind.

[Fool...even escape away from this tower! , Oi, go assemble the surrounding barricade!]

Soldiers sounded the horn, alarming the entire Raspedo Castle.

All of the Motor beat destroyed the outer wall, begin to invade the spire, the silhouette gear troops arrived and enter the steeple in addition. everything happens almost the same time at four directions.

[I am Emurys! who was imprisoned here!? I came to help!!]

TN: this guy just seriously stated his name in the covert operation?? even his father (the king) keep repeat to hide the name...such a hilarious one, I like it.



[...!? that voice, Emurys-nii!? is it really Emrys-nii?]

[Ou. Is that you, Isadora? Yosh, your sound surely lively isn't?]

Emurys who entered inside by breaking the window area similar to Eru, remove his helmet and descent down from the Silver Rat seat.

Showing his face under it, Martina's daughter, Isadora bounce back from her stunned and jump to his chest immediately.

[Otto. It alright now, Isadora.Oi, Don't cry, as expected, you scared cause you are caught right?]

[Tch, Wrong, ...It not that... this... because it was a little crowded and cramped...]
TN: ping-pong!! Tsundere flag raised!!

Isadora wipes her tears and becomes flustered, Emurys teased and stroking the girl in the good mood.

Her hair becomes fluffy, Isadora escaped from his hand in a hurry.

[Haha, if you are healthy then it all good. now that we came here, you don't need to worry about that degradation idiot prince, let get out of here immediately!]

A small laugh and giggle reach Emurys's conscious thru his ears while he returns to Shadow Rat and made preparation for escape.

[Fufu, this is surely strange. Rys-nii called other people a fool!]

While Emurys quickly suit up silhouette gear, he moaned with discouraging appearance.

[What the heck is that mean? nevermind, time to pull out. come here, Isadora!]

Stuffed Isadora in one hand, Emurys' Shadow Rat send out the signal. there is a man who waiting outside the steeple that keeps check around, he began to move in order to lead him.

[Since it will become a little rough, hold on me tightly!]

[eh, wait a sec....Rys-nii, come to think of it again, how come you reach her...e....Hyi... yahhh!?!]

Isadora who reaches the suspicion at that time doesn't have any time to think, they leaped out from the top of the spire, dancing in the air.

Continue to Part 3.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 32.3

Chapter 32 Part 3.

Part 3.

The Princess Elleonora was caught in one of the spires that have been placed in four directions of Raspedo castle.

In a room where is no light, the girl spent her time loosely without doing anything.

Almost as she was imprisoned here for 10 years, completely lost her all life energy.

Actually, It still not reach even one year.

Now, Elleonora who lost her energy is looking exactly like the wilting exhausted flower.

Forced to comply the pronouncement of marriage by Cristobal, the second prince of Jaroudeku kingdom—that means that she gonna married off to the man, the ringleader who murdered her father—destroyed her country.

All of the facts was too harsh and disservice for the sheltered princess who was raised with care among a butterfly and flower.

Hardly to accept it, however, her continuing denial will result in the execution of the next target, her's cousin, Isadora.

No way out, Every choice are sealed.

Until then, she only wishes for a peacefully slumbering, almost as her heart could break too easily at any moment.

Before long, the girl gave up the resistance and just spent the presence day after day in the gloomy state.

(The way I lived so far, almost like a plant...)

TN: inner voice...

She, who was once being got admiring as a large blossoming flower, now got abandoned as a moss that crawling to the land.

She realized it.

The fact that until now she never decided anything by herself.

While face down on the bed, she stared at the wall of the room by slowly crawling her line of sight.

Such a dark, dreary room.

Her mental now is also similar to this room.

Surrounded by a thick wall with a few living reason end up suffocating oneself.

It may look like a respected tower from the outside but its content is empty.

A tear fell on her cheek and made a stain on the sheets.

Wondered what she should do in this world, what she can do.

It is not possible to resolve the difficulty but it was lacking any antidepressant will.

While tasted a sense of helplessness, the girl's limbs spreading ahead.

Even the power to stand up already long gone and not exist anymore.

[...please. somebody, help me...]

A slender tweet spun a "word", a proof of people's intention.

The last resistance that she could do in order to oppose her fate.

A faint voice than a whispered sound, floating along the ambient air—.

At that moment, her vision got shaking around.

The grate that fitted at the window got blown off, a stone wall that supposed to have a considerable robust got destroyed.

Does Elleonora's word hidden an unknown power ? of course, nope.

It has been destroyed by the hole in the wall, a large build knight that she was never seen before entering the room by penetrating the wall.

It demonstrated its ferocious force by breaking the around wall, it was the work of this armored knight.

Elleonora is not even get up, she keeps remain her sight on the situation before her with no reaction.

Rather than she did not respond, she was not able to react due to the too much surprising element.

[I-yah, etto...!? who, there—?]

A voice of lighter tone leaks from such the armored knight.

The arm that pulls down the string with was lifted up with barely sound and manifest the magic of fire in its hand.

The light spreading around and speculated at Elleonora who was frozen on the couch.

Chid who rush in by manipulating the Motor beat into the interior of the spire, cease his motion before the instant sight.

In the light that lit up vividly, a petite figure has emerged.

Probably much as his time of the year, a beautiful girl lie before him.

(...Uwah! this is, did I just hit a jackpot? maybe, but furthermore, she is a princess, right? ...how should I say, she so small just like Eru, also...extremely beautiful too.)
(TN: chid's inner voice...)

Actually, the current Elleonora is fully haggard both mentally and physically, she did not possess a vestige that has been praised beauty as a large blossom flower right now.

But there is not much face detail that could be seen in the dim light room, rather that, should call it just a Child's temporary impression.

Although they had been staring at each other for some time during the silence as both two people lost their reaction, at last, the wit return to Chid, he hastily asks her a question.

[eh...ah... that. Kshyperuk's princess, would you kindly come with me?]

[...yes. a-no, you are, ...hah?]

While Elleonora got too much puzzled by the visited abruptly situation, she involuntarily obediently replies him back.

A sweet voice such as a birdsong tickled Chid's ear.

[I am..., eh... ah...this is such an awkward.]

Chid went back and secured his motor beat, open up the armor part. a chest armor and a helmet rashly, open its apart until around the thigh, belly, and waist area.

Exit from the armor, he removes the emblem from his bosom and held it out before Elleonora.

Elleonora who focus her eyes sticks to the knight with robust and height, round off her eye on the appearance of the boy who emerges from the bottom armor of its.

After got over the slight hesitation, the girl timidly inspects the emblem's detail.

The girl has received an education of the princess. soon she understands the meaning in this depicted emblem.

[This is, Fremmevir kingdom...are you perhaps fromlike aunt Martina?]

[Ah! exactly! then I...came to rescued...the lady...who like Martina...the princess...]

TN: This is interesting, his word really does not connect, Is Elleonora really that charming?

It takes a while for Elleonora in order to understand the meaning of the word that Chid shoot out.

To help, to escape, who? from where? the girl's mind came across with a fragment of thought.

But she not able to reach the conclusion.

She wants to try clinging on the offered helping hand but the girl hand and feet won't budge and did not move at all.

The resignation had scooped her mind, it not easily to wipe it out.

[Run away from here?...then, where on earth am I gonna run to?]

Even he just immediately come up with something called an escaping, Chid was thinking and tilted his neck over before the unexpected question.

[No matter place I go, it will be useless. this country already been ruined...and another thing, father is no...longer here anymore.]

Tear fall out at her latter half remark, even her word is withered.

Her weak heart can no longer endure any more despair.

Fear toward a blank future, that why she was motionless before this opportunity.

Even with the helping hand of powerful knight would be meaningless before her state.

(While she keep such an apparent, she was a small frail princess inside? ...I was wrong when assumed her to be the same as Eru...or maybe use Eru as a standard is already wrong in the first place...did I made a mistake at many points until now?)

Chid shook his head, after all, It's too much difficult to ignore the impression of his small childhood friend who never stops moving forward in his head.

He must concentrate on the girl who in front of his eyes right now.

Unlike that monster in the form of the young child, this girl is more like a delicate glasswork that would be immediately broken after being touched.



[All right, we are still here as your ally. once we got out of here, let go splashing on those guys who attacked you, let show them that you gonna regain back this country.]

Once she heard it, far from cheer up, Elleonora went sinking even deeper.

Look like it was a wrong word, Chid soaked up in a cold sweat.

[I am...weak. not able to do anything even I was called a princess, without anything. fight? where? I can't even move myself-desu...]

[Isn't fine for being weak? after all, the fight should be carried out by a knight, the strong person like us who fight with sword and armor.]

The return word came back with the diffidence, Elleonora who headed down until now raise up her face.

[Who will listen...word is nothing more than a tool...who will follow and fight for someone like me?]

Recalled the figure of saying Cristobal, the girl was trembling.

Such an acne in her memory turned into a different form.

It became such a beast that sip her a flesh and blood.

As this rate, she will become a hollow one.

[There is one, after all, I am here.]

Chid stretched out his hand from to the back of the motor beat, conveying her with a clearly great will and determination.

Supplied by his magic, the assembled magic surgery formula crying, the armored machine begins to move.

Strumming the crystal tissue, the armor expanding and covering his hand and feet, sealed the chest armor part.

His appearance disappears from Elleonora eyes.

Instead, one knight clad in a heavy armor is now standing before her.

[In order to reprise you as a knight, I will wield the sword for your sake, I will protect you as your's knight.]

TN: the very line of the part!!

Elleonora who still remains silent looking up at the huge armor.

The armored knight and the boy who inside it floats up a small fire.

Now, their appearance is completely different to her, once it seemed to overlap with those who have lost their life from the fight in order to protect her.

[...mine...knight...can you protect me without dying?]

Chid remembered the knight gesture that he learn at the school, took the audience bow with a superlative great respect.

The motor beat down on its knee.

[Your royal highness. please give me my first responsibility as your knight.]

Chid just keep waiting, while the heavily remain silent passed, before long, a small murmur came out and reached him.

[...this place is...so disgusting. I am, why I have to married to the man who killed my father, I don't want to... please take me out of this place.]

[At your will!]

Elleonora grabbed the outstretched hand.

The chilly and soft feeling sense from the touching at Chid's hand assault his mind suffered an attack from such a weak small girl, Chid desperately collects his remaining consciousness in order to move the motor beat.

After a while that silhouette gear jumps off the tower, a slender scream resounded on the silence night.

Continue to Part 4.

PS. quite an epic part...a knight swearing scene...not much you gonna seen in similar robot novel.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 32.4

Chapter 32 Part 4.

Hmm...is google's time just mess up? pretty sure that it was 21 hours ago since part 3.

Part 4.

The motor beat that Eru rode on jumped from the top floor of the steeple while holding Martina in its arm.

Even you said that it was a pullout, it just a simply free-falling no matter how much you looking at it.

Leaving from the tower in such a very bold way.

However, it does not seem like a suiciding act at all since Martina withstood it without leaking any sound or clenched her teeth.

She just simply sitting normally as expected for the only daughter of Ambrosius.

Although the spire is very high but with a free-fall movement, it just only a blink of the eye to them when they almost reach the ground.

Look at the ground that closing in rapidly, Martina indeed gasped.

At that time, motor beat extends the another arm and embracing her tightly, firing a shining silver arrowhead along with the sharp blowing sound.

The wire anchor flying penetrate an air of the night and pierces into the wall.

With its support, the motor beat reduces the falling impact velocity.

A sound of "Air Suspension" magic activated on the verge of the ground can be heard.

A mass of compressed of the air lifts the motor beat on behalf of the ground softly.

In addition, motor beat also fully killed the remaining falling momentum completely and rise up as it is as it was nothing unusual.

At its surrounding, the other Shadow Rat are getting out and show themselves one after another.

[...Hah...even I already prepared, It still a little rough. are you, are you really a knight!?

It truly that we really “escaping” for sure but... this is beyond calling insane too much!]

For Eru, this is just a simple maneuver that he familiar with but it not the case for the other person.

Listening to the protest voice of Martina who tries hard to calm down, however, he answered back with a cool look.

[If it just this much then it just a normal thing for knight of Fremmevir, you know?]

Martina floated a horrible imagination in the sky, while she did not return home for a while, did her home just turn into some kind of a den of thieves?

TN: 魔窟- den of thieves, red-light district – or may be I should use a circus?

Word of the incidentally Eru had fully misled her somehow, It not an entire false but it just a truth limited to the Silver Phoenix knight order only.

Aside from that, the other troops begin to link up with Eru who reach the meeting point first.

[Ou, look like aunty also made it safely! silver leader too, good work!]

Looking back to the familiar sultry voice origin, Emurys’s Shadow Rat which got a handful with Isadora stood there.

Martina greatly relieved at the fact that she saw her daughter also made it out, although she betting on the decision to believe Eru’s word.

Soon, Ady’s troops also linked up but she was empty-handed.

[My side was miss! ah, to cling on Eru-kun tightly like that...so jealous!!]

Ady’s groaned was splendidly ignored as usual.

Then a little late later, Chid join up while he got handful hugging Elleonora as the last one.

Silver Phoenix knights manage to successfully rescue every member of Kshyperuk royal family that being held captive.

[Now that all royal family who had been caught are all gathered, seem like we don’t have any trouble, right? Yosh, let get away from this place, shall we?]

[Even you said that but the commotion already spread around the castle. they will definitely focus on a gate, how are you gonna slip out! can you overcome them with only this much war potential?]

Martina who harboring anxiety having been understood the obvious fact, she doubts about this “conventional war potential” which mainly composed of infantry.

Eru replied her with a smile.

[In the first place, there is no need for us to go at the gates.]

After his words, everyone starts running toward “to the wall”.

Running without wire anchor and standing against the walls.

What they need to devote in order to escape is a speed.

Using the magic “Aero Thrust” without hesitation, the party got throw up secretly.

TN: Aero Thrust : a magic that creates an air compressed propulsion.

The sound of air compressed explosion roaring while the frame of silhouette gear accelerating with an explosive speed.

They just leave it to the propulsion momentum, went up with strange ran with a speed on the towering walls that vertically from the ground.

The stuffed Martina group lost for words as such a thing before their eyes.

The silhouette gear troops that overcame the walls excellently are the existence that massively lacks common sense as they just came jump out and head toward the darkness.

They rebound themselves with a recoil from “Aero Thrust” explosion, the silhouette gear troops flew out to the other side of the moat easily.

For them, it is just a button for pressing when met with such as obstacles.

Silhouette gear troops entered the city, run through the top of roof realm.

Depending on a mana pool size of each individual, the speed performance of silhouette gear is even greater than a horse in short distance travel.

Faster than the laid security network can relay a news about the confusion in the castle to the city security, Silver Phoenix knight armor troops are on verge of its departure from Fontanie city.

At that time, Raspedo castle still under the confusion state without any intel, a full complexity state, they were not able to take any action.

After all, the guard who was stationed there still not clearly understands where does the

intruder come from or where did they leave after they were outwitted in the middle of the night.

However, this is not normally commotion for the guard who was assigned to protect the spire since all Kshyperuk's royal family are now certainly escaped.

[D, Damn you. what a, what a blunder! how the heck I gonna report this to his highness!!]

Dorote who is the commander was entrusted with the castle responsibility yelling out a thundering roar.

A full fierce anger roar enough to involuntarily silence and stop the moment of the surrounding soldiers.

He usually an relatively mild person but now blown up with an anger like a furious volcano.

[What happen to the thief!? where does it run to!? Is there anyone who saw their figure!!]

[A, about that...the soldiers who protect the castle gate reported that they did not see any thief appearance. Soldiers at that time appeared to be patrolling so we end up not able to got any intel....]

Dorote raises a creak and clenches his teeth after got flustered by heard his subordinates reporting

The soldiers who foresaw the eruption fall back a half step on their own but Dorote remain silent.

Punishing all soldiers here would be meaningless, rather that, he must think for the next move.

The escaping of Kshyperuk royal family must not be allowed.

If they were stolen, then it must be recovered back at all cost.

For that reason, He will do everything regardless the method.

[At this rate...Damn it! mobilize the entire soldiers in the city to scan thoroughly the entire area range! if theif already escaped from the town at a worst case! then, Airship!! go immediately prep the flying airship. send it out to searching the outside town area...don't let them escape at all cost, whatever it takes!!]

Immediately after he saying, the soldiers start hurriedly running fiercely to the "Air Field".

[Did you said "Thief"!? who on earth is them...remnants of Kshyperuk? there is no way

they have such a force. that would be an unexpected explanation to the story. but no matter who is it, those who get in the way of his highness, I will crushed them until nothing remain!]

Dorote Marudonness—the person who was a loyal old veteran to Jaroudeku kingdom is now risk everything in order to track back the royal family.

Continue to Part 5.

PS: Wall running , Double jump ...as expected of exo-suit in another world...

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 32.5-32.6

Chapter 32 Part 5 & 6

Part 5.

The silhouette gear troops escaped from Fontanie with quickness such as gale heading into the woods as it is near the city.

Use the simple forest to hide from the deployed pursuers because they escape safely from the castle.

[Although It has become a little rough way, Did you get hurt somewhere? since we already made a preparation, please wait a moment. the transportation from now on will be changed.]

Martina who finally got off from motor beat's arm starts to rise up with an unsteady step.

The mind of the woman did not hide the color of fatigue that been through a forced fiercely marching.

[You called that "a little"? hey, that was quite an exciting experience. but Jaroudeku's pursuer will be catching soon. To outrun them is not an easy task, how on earth are you plan to do from here?...]

During the time she saying, Martina's voice become lighter and lighter when she noticed the presence that lies before her eyes.

Shine with the moonlight, illuminate a huge variant figure crouched in the forest.

It was a variant figure of half man half horse, the majestic figure of centaur knight, Tzendrinble.

[... this thing...just what in the world is this?]

Martina group which got breathtaking, gazing at such a mysterious thing while every member of Silver Phoenix knights is deftly preparing.

Two units of Tzendrinble along with two wagons were stand by at this place.

They walk to the wagon and hop on one of them while silhouette gears being stored in another one.

Then Chid and Ady jumped up and entering the cockpit of Tzendrinble.

The ether reactor which was set in an inactive mode now starting up, the centaur knight leak a neigh as a sign of awakening.

A voice reached Martina who remained stunned looking at how they proceed with preparation , Eru's voice pulling her conscious back to real world.

[then, Everyone, please get on the wagon. we will leave soon. since if we didn't go soon, we will not able to get away from this place far enough as we planned.]

[Y...yes...]

Martina who finally only answered him shortly pinched Isadora's cheek who was stand behind and still in her own's world.

The girl group already got startled at the knight who ride in silhouette gear scene but this centaur knight had delivered more impact than that.

Also, they never heard about any silhouette knight in another form than a human form before.

Emurys who rose up here saying that this thing was made in Fremmevir kingdom.

The girl group twisted their neck before an unexpected mind exhausted question and answer while they got across the street on the wagon.

[...I have not gone back for while, Just what on earth happening in Fremmevir kingdom...?]

[Ha Ha! there still more to see after this. then, Aunty, you should take a loot at this!]

They did not amazed at Emurys's appearance while he guiding them but they wonder why Emurys showing the guts pose while he at it instead.

TN: hmnn...must be some kind of Macho Pose!! just imagine that someone makes a weird pose that shows off his muscle while that person also guiding you on something....

The girl group was guided to the waiting room inside the wagon.

Originally, It was a room that a knight runner use for rest when they on the long distance travel, the internal may look a bit over cheap in its own way.

Elleonora is just only one who still in embarrassment behind Martina group who got on board with curiosity.

[...This is...a reality...really happen...?]

Believed in the boy's word that he would become Her knight, thus, she hardened her

resolve to escape, the scene in front of her eye is too realistic as almost a lie.

Her mind can no longer successfully recognize the reality, thus, she finally begun to think.

About the help coming, about got stuck in Raspedo castle too, her weak heart had witnessed a good scene of convenience too much.

This event has many things happen too much at once.

That is, It was a thing that easily exceeds the permissible amount of her frail spirit.

[It gonna be fine, Your royal highness.]

A word flew from the centaur knight toward such a half-sleep person as her.

A voice of boy knight reaches out to her, it was a huge, fearsome, centaur knight but the girl wonders why she can clearly see the boy figure behind its crystal eyeball.

[Just leave it to me, I and this Tzendrinble will definitely escort you to the safe place.]

Her knight's word pulled her back to the harsh reality. because it was her's command, and he answered it. how can she not believe in this knight? After gathering a bit of determination, the girl goes stand up.

[...Yes, please do...]

Her slender voice would have been drowned out immediately in this place due to a driving acoustic of silhouette knight, however, the boy's ear clearly heard it.

[Hou hou! Chid...you just suddenly looking motivated-ne! As I thought, Chid is still a boy after all... did you already fallen for the beautiful princess?]

[Shut it. I just...that it, it...is a duty...as members of silver phoenix knight order!]

[Houuu-Uho ho ho ho ho. good, good for you, I wish to get motivated like that too! just like that.]

[Garghh!! You will make the other people misunderstand it, Ady!!]

While the two siblings chatting at each other, all preparation has been completed.

Eru voice came from silhouette knight which got carried on the wagon.

[Yeah, yeah, both you two, surely energetic. get ready. then, Silver Phoenix knight...let it's begins!]

The two Tzendrinble begin to move. with a neigh sound.

Head toward an end of the eastern side of Old Kshyperuk kingdom.

The fledgling knight becomes strong by rescuing the bound princess.

Part 6.

One flying airship rowing thru the wind and hop on Obinie's ridges at dawn.

Dorote had been sitting deeply on the captain's seat while listening to a sound of wind torrent that came thru a glass window.

Basking in the dazzling morning sun in dazzling, he putting up a hand in frustrating.

He and this airship which carrying his troops had left Fontanie and heading toward the east of Old Kshyperuk castle in over all night.

For the airship going the sky that not affected by the terrain, it advances extremely fast compared to existing mobile means such as horse-drawn carriage and silhouette knight.

They already stepped big forward into the east.

[...Where...where the hell in this land...the fled royal family should be somewhere around here!]

The line of sight of Dorote pouring around a map for possible location of Old Kshyperuk royal family on the captain's seat.

It's not something that he made recently with haste but it was an extremely detail one.

He borrowed it from Raspedo castle with him.

Moving by flying airship may be fast but there also a con since the way to read the course is completely different.

If going by land then road and the city itself are already a course mark.

But now they have seen it all from a bird's eye view, all of the circumstances will be different.

A compass and a map, see the scenery view from above to the terrain and imagine collates it all--had replaced the land's navigator, It require such capability.

From such a situation, the strategic value of a high precision map had been growing even more.

[Impossible, so it heading east?]

A number was seen writing on the map.

To determine the course, Dorote and “Air Navigator” group who traces all lead sign debate together.

They did not just jump on random guesswork.

There was a good reason for that they took a course to the east.

First, Dorote has been specular that royal family will run not away to the west. because west of Fontanie mean fled to the central of Old Kshyperuk kingdom which they have no ally there.

He was remembered at that time.

For some time, the rumors about an unidentified enemy had a rampage in the land of the east, the unstable east area.

And now, the royal family suddenly got took away.

Everything leads to a single conclusion so it was no unusual thought.

[Seem like the course they were taken, is around this place. We can catch them with the airship.]

Next, he set a course along the highway.

Predicting that the escaped royal family would focus on the speed.

They have one chance to caught them in a middle way secretly since the wheel track from the beginning still not trodden here.

If the royal family move by used any means, they will use a highway in order to move quickly.

The remaining question is a searching “range”.

Since it extremely difficult to searches in the midnight, they had been devoted to just moving so far.

Now it already dawns, they must narrow down where to search.

With a certain course of a search, no matter how much fast the airship flying, they will not

leeway.

Airship movement becomes possible by using a “Blow Engine” and it strongly affected by the weather.

[...also...even the wind is flowing to the east?... what a favorable one...]

Dorote gives a command to the subordinates while a full sharp light up in the back of his pupil.

by sail with wind blow in the meantime, the airship increases its speed.

A creak of the hull that sounds occasionally reach his ears, he sharpens his fangs quietly toward the mission time.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 32.7

Chapter 32 Part 7.

Part 7.

While Martina group basking in a morning light, Silver Phoenix knights carried them with a running non-stop speed on “Kshyeru road” passing through Old Kshyperuk kingdom.

[Mother, look! for reached another place like this in over a night really look like an absurd scene.]

[I hope that my eyes play trick on me but...that thing, to be faster than a horse, furthermore, a long run silhouette knight...truly an absurdity...]

Emurys just only answered with his shrugged at Martina’s openly chatting between mother and daughter,

The imitation of half horse, Tzendrinble packed with a performance that specializes in moving ability.

Furthermore, it also had a tough endurance due to its equipped two units of ether reactor which allow it to display a real potential in the long distance movement more than anything.

Even taken a fatigue of knight runner into account, by theoretically, it still possible to cross the continent without any replenishment.

As a result of running through the night by Ady and Chid, the distance that they traveled is beyond common sense and greatly took back the Martina group.

[Tzendrinble...is it...to able completed this strange silhouette knight, Rys-nii’s subordinates is a bit of strange...]

[Is that so? may be because a horse is an ally of the knight, I thought that was a good idea too, but rather than, when I saw this guy for the first time, I did want to jump on it for the first try...]

[To think of such a thing really like Rys-nii...]

Emury just puzzled and made a Hm! sound.

[Isn’t fine? with it, we were able to help everyone in this way. after all, it will take him away.]

Martina and Isadora looked at each other.

They also knew each other long enough, no need to say more.

But anymore un-commonsense would definitely be a total exhaustion to their mind.

[So, in the end, you never been involved with “Detail thing”, right? surely, we should able to outrun from the hand of pursuer if it was this fast.]

[For now, we will link up with the main force. then after that, I like to make an attack! because I still did not return the favor to that rumor idiot prince.]

Martina has turned around with a tightening facial expression to Emurys who proudly assured her.

[Rys, listen carefully, certainly, you had led the strong knight more than I thought. but the enemy is the Jaroudeku kingdom, not a small fry enemy. the knights who try to protect our country got a countless mortality, despite that, they still unmatched for them. but for you to carelessly said that you gonna launch a fight...I am the one here who disagree with it.]

You can call this conversation until now a leisure one but that was up to this point.

Suddenly, a bell that fitted in the waiting room resound.
TN: resound with a Klang! Kang! Kan! sound as SFX sound.

This is just a simple function in the Tzendrinble cockpit, something for use as a means to communication.

You can tell the meaning by verifying the tone ring of a bell same as a code and the meaning of today's tone is....

[“Abnormality, be vigilant” huh?... by the rumors, don't tell me that they have a thing that able to chasing Tzendrinble. look like it is as Auntie said, I'm so pissed off!]

As he saying, Emurys had jumped out of the waiting room like a gust.

He heads toward the cockpit of the golden lion (Gordesleo) that sitting on the wagon.

Martina who was left behind rounded her eyes at the sudden situation and immediately understood the meaning of his tweet.

[How...It can't be, We already been this far....no, don't tell me...how...can even enemy catching up in this place...with the speed of centaur knight!]

Martina jump to the window of the waiting room, peek out at the landscape behind with her wide open eyes.

There was a black point as a stain on the clear sky at a spreading dawn.

She doesn't need much time to figure out.

[Airship...of Jaroudeku kingdom!]

The flying airship is stretching its sail to the end of left and right side while screeching at a mast of the hull.

While peeping with a telescope at the front distant view mirror of the bridge, Dorote floated a ghastly smile that covered his beard mouth.

[When you follow the wind, they also lead you to whatever thing that riding it...I bet this is my win! I finally found you. Kshypreuk's royalties! you shall not escape...!!]

Overflowing with a spirit of old man, he crossed the bridge to breathe.

He passing the telescope to his subordinates and issue a command.

[Get the airship above them!! We gonna drop a Tyrantor on them directly. The royalty surely in our hand here now, we will take them along the way, First, release the sealed "Catapult"!]

[Roger that, speed up, lower the altitude!! prepare the catapult!]

The men recite his order and begin to move at once.

The wind engine equipment is driving to challenge the output limit from mana pool that owns by the centaur knight, it caused a strong air current around the ship.

While above the normal further speed, airship begin lower the altitude platform.

The upcoming speed of the ship at that time far exceeded Tzendrinble.

With the flying airship caught up with an unbelievable speed from their behind, Chid & Ady who piloted Tzendrinble had been staring at such a scene which stunned in a middle way.

[Oi oi...what the hell is that, that thing! it's a ship, a ship flying in the sky!]

[Ship is not usually fly, right?—right?? to think of that there is a person who makes a strange thing like Eru-kun...]

Both of them got curious at the appearance of the airship which they saw for the first time.

They chatting this and that while forgets that it's the enemy's pursuers. suddenly, The airship is about come up with something and they were forced back to the reality.

[Keh, Not good! It starts attacking!]

While changing the course in a hurry, a stone bullet was downpour around Tzendrinble.

The stone bullet that flew with a gravity moment went gouge the ground and echoing a sound along the way.

The aim is sketchy, only a few shots manage to hit a highway.

Judge from a result of this degree's attack, look like the penetrate power is no joke as a tree went sinking in the land, Chid and Ady break out in a cold sweat.

[Kusso! at this rate, It will catch up. Is this not quite a bit of sneaky?]

The speed of Tzendrinble that shook its course is falling.

The airship keeps chasing and closing without a gap.

At that time, Dorote was made a sortie preparation in the airship.

His body already sat in the cockpit of Tyrantor,

All knight runners already sitting inside in the cockpit of six Tyrantor that lined up.

He quickly on the next move, for that reason, he is gonna lead his squad directly himself.

The airship's figurehead that fitted with a wind engine release a great artificially wind, the airship take a hunched course over the centaur knight.

It keeps advancing while lower the altitude enough hit the around tree, despite that, it does not stop the black knight that soon will be dropping from its belly.

[The time is now, we must take this opportunity, end this in one's breath, let's go!]

[Contact!!]

The centaur knight is disturbed by the looming airship.

In the next moment, the luggage that placed on the top of the wagon blowing its cover.

Emitted a roar, openly extending the four arms of its back, the irregular demon, Ikaruga begins to move.

in the cockpit, Eru ignores everything but the kitchen sink as the situation become tense, his eyes, his face glued at the holo-monitor.

His face is lovely but his blooming smile was filling with crucially intense intention one.

[Arrr...My god,...My goddd! An airship...amazing, It's amazing! It really floating with its entire hull. wrong.... It did not sail like a "Ballon Airship". I don't understand, It does not match the rule of "that world"(Earth). surely that there must be something that I don't know, surely.... there must be something nice up there, right!?)

[TN: this is a reason that you should not show the toy to a child, right?]

He moves with a rapid speed while sprinkling a roar.

The maneuver of Ikaruga was too much complicated to the point that it can't be deal with the normal conventional method, It needs a direct control support from the computer knowledge that Eru passing. with that, his intentions become a will of the demon which had begun to crazy dashing out bravely.

[Both of you, please continue to keep Tzendrinble marching like this, about that thing, that flying airship, I will..."Itadakimasu"!!]

TN: いadakimasu expression of gratitude before meals

Ikaruga's body jump off from the carriage after told Tzendrinble in a modest way.

Ikaruga landed on a highway and unleashing a huge magical power which stored in its body.

Magius jet thruster starts roaring up, create a fierce acceleration that even left the Tzendrinble behind.

The demon god, the one machine in the world that incorporated with a heart that once belongs to the monsters such as Behemoth & Shell cast Queen.

Ikaruga is soaring up, blowing off to the sky while cobbling a road as a reaction.

[What the hell is that thing!? It...It coming this way!?)

Ikaruga rose up red in the sky with the massive output power of magius jet thruster, flying to the airship in just a straight line.

It purely seeks to aim only for the airship, without any hesitation, ram on it with a collision course which packed with the shortest distance momentum.

Even there is a certain excellent function that allows the airship in the sky for a long period of time, it still needs to rely on the wind as its driving propulsion.

To said that such a thing will escape from the demon who flying at a high speed of an explosive flame would be a ground baseless talk.

Moreover, it was a place that was close to the Airship that catching up with Tzendrinble.

Sailors who got attacked all look at the figure from the bridge and screaming at their best before such an abnormal situation.

First of all, as they looked at the unknown silhouette knight clad in flame, they do not know what's going on.

Then, while they are in fear and confusion at the exciting sound that Ikaruga released.

[What wrong? Is there something happen!? What happen to the dropping sequence?]

The waiting Dorote who was impatiently and eager to joining in the war has noticed that something happen.

[Hyiii, W....We don't know! A...Abnormality....Silhouette knight is here!? it just dropped and clinging on our ship, sir!!]

Heard his subordinates who report in confusion tone, Dorote stares blankly at the hull wall. MISHIRI! MISHIRI! a creaking sound raising on the outer plate.

TN: ミシリ SFX sound.

He immediately understood that something just crawls up on the airship.

The horror run up to his back.

After hesitated for a moment, Dorote immediately starts up his Tyrantor.

He blows up the outer plate that Ikaruga had clung on from the inside and destroyed the scaffold, causing Ikaruga to fall.

Eru is indeed startle but he manages with the injection from magius jet thruster and sustain himself in the midair vertically, and end up with a distance behind.

An appearance of Tyrantor that raised up its back weapon looking through a large hole that opened in the fuselage of the flying airship.

It's the one that Dorote piloted.

He has perceived the anomaly threat and utilizing the powerful back weapon to blow out the outer hull that enemy clung on.

Dorote still keep shooting from there.

[Ahaha, nice reaction. you look superb! here you go, my return the favored shot! for your unreserved attack.]

Dodging the attack with the great mobility, Ikaruga unpacks a sword cannon that attached to its waist.

The internal mechanism turned expanding the blade and firing a large number of magic cannon, a too much fierce counter attack.

A flame bullet shot by sword cannon piercing the flying airship one after another, the sprayed of roar flame penetrate the outer wall, enveloped internal in flames.

Causing a continuous explosion and blowing off the wall.

Penetrate an armor that decorated the flying airship which made by assuming that it can withstand against normal power bullet.

Before a unique demon output of Ikaruga that greater than another machine, it was an unexpected.

[Absudity!! what a power.... Not good, at this rate, the airship will fall!!]

In that moment, Dorote's mind came across with many choices.

To capture Kshyperuk's royal, for that reason they must drop the black knight at all cost but if this sky demon was left unchecked for, the flying airship will become easily fallen.

In the first place, can he defeat it with a black knight? he was not fully confidence. just one thing that he certain, at this rate, the airship will definitely fall and his plan will fail along with it.

[Damnnnnnnn itttttttt!!!]

By thinking around, his decision was made.

Dorote's Tyrantor holding up a shield at the exposed hole in the flying airship hull.

He received a direct hit of roaring flame that exceeds the usual blow power, a fragment of crystal tissue came off and scatter by the blown that shook his entire body from his shield.

He was on his knee in just a few shots, the one that specialize in robustness as Tyrantor is now barely moving.

[...Emergency turning! now! leave this area immediately!!]

The men who saw Dorote's behavior followed it instantly.

Furthermore, the airship is taking an unsteadily changing course to prevented more destruction of the black knight from the magic attack.

[A-re? even I took too much a trouble to coming all the way here, are you done already? that no good-desu. I still not satisfy....yet?]

While remaining in the frenzy, Eru who is trying to give a chase look back behind the commotion.

There are something following the Tzendrinble, shadows running along the highway.

[That is...A detached force!....now you finally done it!...]

In that moment, Eru was lost in thought.

The remaining power of Ikaruga probably enough to chasing the airship at this rate.

But he will leave Tzendrinble behind .

The goal of Silver Phoenix knights to assure the safety and bring back Kshyperuk's royalty is now overriding his own goal.

With little reason left in a corner of his mind, he halted his desire.

[Fuuu...Fine. that ship, I will let you have it for now. when we met again... I will eat it to my heart's content, without leaving any piece of its part.]

Eru turn around Ikaruga after left a word of wholehearted chagrin.

Leave by flipping the heat haze explosive flame, Ikaruga flew back fast to the original position of Tzendrinble

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 32.8

Chapter 32 Part 8.

Part 8.

Go back on the time before the airship encountered the Tzendrinble.

There is a shadow run dashing in the forest that spread around a highway.

When to compare it with the surrounding area, the shadows is a huge figure with the height of 10 meters, in another word, it was a silhouette knight.

Nevertheless, its speed is unusual, it was fast than an average silhouette knight speed many times.

There is still more strange part, in addition, the shadows hardly make any noise when running.

Not to mention about the muscles driving's sound, even the intake and exhaust sound of Ether reactor also can't be heard, its presence was an unbelievable thin.

Its silhouette knight frame is very slender, highly skilled in agility.

It could be said that it was paper thin build among the type, there was a strange sharp claw at both of its hand and shoulders.

Further strange characteristic would be its head.

There is nothing that can be said about the design in its head, beside holes to ensure its viewing field, it just has a smooth curved surface.

A "Nonfacial characteristic" being—is moving without a sound, its impression can be assumed as one that belongs to a ghost.

The number of ghosts is not only one. two machines, three machines—An assembled troops of such a machines is progressing by jump up and down in the forest.

On their path, there a figure of centaur knight which ran on a highway.

The purpose of this ghost is so clear.

They just suddenly increase their speed and heading to the road.

Before long, they just step forward a huge leap and danced on top of the highway.

Only a shadow presence that just falls on the road soundlessly.

They drew near without alert the Tzendrinble which focus on the running and pouncing on it—with sharp claws in their both hand.

[Oi, newcomer!? Who the hell are you!?!]

An attack of a large sword that swinging with a storm's speed repelled and sent the ghost flying back into a forest.

The wielder of such a sword can be no one except Emurys's Gordesleo which stood on top of the wagon.

Golden lion does not have a valid weapon against an airship, so, It remains to stick with this wagon to escort the horse-drawn carriage.

[That was a close one! don't tell me that the airship was a decoy? that really a nasty tactic!!]

Emurys re-stance his golden lion with a sword and now, kneeling on the top of the wagon.

Because Tzendrinble is on the move, it was impossible for him to launch a further attack.

Such a situation that can't do anything but waiting is really unpleasant for him.

Without teasing him too much, the ghost comes attacking again.

It runs pala pala and jumps out of the woods, aim for catching the wagon that towed by Tzendrinble again.

For the unstable foothold such as a moving wagon, It extremely immobile limited place for the golden lion to swing its large sword around.

Although he manages to push the enemy away, it really not easy to reduce its number with a sword.

The irritation being to accumulate in Emurys's mind.

[If this was a land battle, I would turn them into iron scrap long time ago! it is regrettable but we can't stop the Tzendrinble either...]

He is not only one who harbored an impatience.

[Geezz, this thing. Just when Eru still not back! We need to shake this thing off, somehow...]

Tzendrinble is wielding a spear cavalry but it can't attack the ghost.

Because it is continuing to run and pulling the wagon, far from a decent fight, it even can't fight back at all, by unable to have one's way with but the defense only has turned this into in a desperate situation.

Also, look like the ghosts also understand that fact as well, it only come persistence from behind Tzendrinble.

They were in a battle that vastly outnumbered and the situation is too bad.

Gradually, turning into a dangerous situation.

The ghosts have jumped in unison again.

Gold lion and Tzendrinble was restrained to brandishing their specialized weapon.

Gradually, their power of concentration has been torn down and piled up a fatigue.

Finally, one ghost machine manages to slip out from their overwatch and jump on the wagon at the different period.

[This is bad! I can't evade it....]

The ghost is jumped into the bosom of Tzendrinble.

Its arm rushing with at a furious speed and aiming at the belly of the defenseless horse.

The concealed weapon of a ghost packed with enough power to penetrate silhouette knight frame.

The moment before the very sharp claws gonna gouged into the belly of Tzendrinble.

A very long spear of flame pierced the belly of a ghost before it can land its attack.

A blast turns the thin armor of a ghost that emphasis on quickness into smithereens and debris in an instant.

There is a thing that jumped follow the flame while blowing off the dust cloud of destruction on the highway.

[You guys are....how dare of you, because of you guys, the airship got to escape! allow me to express my thank!...]

Release an explosive flame and thunderous sound, shooting words that burning with

anger, it is the masked devil with six arms, Ikaruga.

When Ikaruga catching up to Tzendrinble, it flying with the speed as a crimson flame, and keeping like that, Soon, it landed on the top of the wagon.

[You guys really not worth enough as an airship replacement...you will pay with your body]

Ikaruga which just landed on the wagon stretching out its folded arms from the back grabbed a reserved sword cannon that stored on the wagon.

Its figure rises almost like a hedgehog, direct its sword cannon in all direction.

Increased its stretch, the demon is roaring.

The terrifying magic that stored in the body is now release,

A destruction attack is keep emitting from the sword cannon.

Shot at every tree, blow and penetrated everything includes the ghost that jumps into a forest too.

For the ghost that tries to break away with its high-speed sprint, it can't avoid the surround explosion and got caught with it and decimated.

With the hand of furious demon that keep non-stop slaughtered every single ghost machines, all ghost are turned into a corpse in no time.

Ikaruga just incidentally rewrite the entire landscape.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 32.9

Chapter 32 Part 9.

Part 9.

A lone flying airship staggering soar in the sky of dusk.

Suffered from a magic attack of the raging demon, Dorote's airship somehow barely escaped from it.

It was a fierce appearance that burned down many sections of the outer walls even distorted the steel frame.

Because they fled with maximum speed in that state which creates and piled up a strain, now, the hull is in bad shape and soon will reach its limit.

The only blessing among this unfortunate fate is that Ether floating device still intact.

Once this thing broke down, the airship will be not able to float in a sky anymore.

[...lower the altitude. don't crash it.]

Dorote who sat on the captain's seat, spit out the word in a gloomy state.

Go back to the time that fights the demon, how come that it did not give a chase?

In vice versa, there must be anything that poses a threat greater than this ship.

The men have quietly followed his instructions, the ship landed on the ground.

Now that the ship is no longer usable, they have no choice but go back with Tyrantor's foot from here.

Even that Tyrantor which got damaged and destroyed by protecting the airship also in a plight for transportation purpose.

Before Dorote's squad who got off the ship leaves this place, there is something that they must do.

That is destroyed the airship.

The airship is a unique and crucial weapon of Jaroudeku kingdom.

Although it got a heavy damage and not able to fly anymore, he can't leave it in that state.

Dorote manipulates Tyrantor raise its small battle hammer in a jerk motion.

He applies an unnecessary force on the control stick that he hold, trembling even now.

Lose the ship, lose the black knight.

Furthermore, fail to recover the fled Kshyperuk's royalty.

A grave blunder that he does not dare to ask a pardon.

Almost as Dorote has lost everything.

It would be better if he was sunk together with the airship—such a masochistic thinking is now piling up in his mind.

At that time, one of his men who watched the entire situation pointed beyond a sky noisily.

Beyond the line of sight of all members, there is a black point that has been a stain in the sky.

That is an approaching airship which gonna reach them soon.

Two vessels of airship are advancing toward the west under the twinkling night star.

One intact airship, behind it, the second airship that has a trace of mysterious damaged on its hull is towing by the first one from behind.

Without saying that one belong to Dorote's fleet.

It advances steadily and takes a cruise with intending to pick them up.

Dorote who leave Tyrantor cockpit looking at the picking airship and the face of his subordinates, he showed a look of relief.

But his face distorts immediately, take a rough walk foot step from the hanger to the bridge.

An appearance of Dorote who went up the ladder appears into the scene of the bridge.

He keeps an eye on them in one place.

At the person who sat on the captain's seat who take up position in that place

[...So, as expected, it's you, Sir Gerhild.]

he walks to captain seat and called the name of the female knight who sat on it.

One of the knights of Jaroudeku kingdom was sitting there, the Grandmaster who led his Steel Fang knights, Gerhild Hietakannas.

While She always abiding with her leering smile, she breaks the greeting.

[Yeah, it's me, or there is something that you want to complain?]

[....Oh no..you jest, I am truly grateful on behalf of my subordinates....]

Their relationship is not that much close.

If anything, Gerhild is more like a person who stand behind the scenes of the surrounding.

Witness at emaciation appearance of the unnatural Dorote, she express her doubts.

[So, What happen? Aren't you his highness best men? being got truly slapping like that. isn't that a bit sorrowful state? It's not what am I thinking right?]

Dorote did not hide his bitter situation, he groaning at the whole situation include his blunder from the other day.

[....and that is all of my stories, maybe I really go senile. It was shameless to accept that we got defeated by some silhouette knight in the night, moreover, it was a completely beaten.]

The demon who cornered them was an unbelievable enemy even for the veteran warrior as Dorote.

[...my fate is sealed and done. this blunder would probably cost my life.]

The cool and daring air of Jaroudeku military instructor do not exist there at him anymore.

By looking at his feeble appearance, Gerhild spat out a word while frowning.

[Tch! by giving that dedicated wrinkle neck, you think that gonna redeem the mistake? I really can not say amazing...]

[...Then...then, how the heck I have to do in order to atone for this, this grave blunder?]

[This is why a warmonger is....! Listen! the royal family got escaped , lost both the airship and black knight, both of them are worse. but the worst is you come back home without having any single bit of information about the enemy.]

Gerhild led the Copper Fang knights which are a group that stands between them.

Their main role is collecting information also assassination depending on the case.

Dorote becomes thoughtful with a word of different logic from the knight.

Determine to make an atonement, he slightly forces a comeback.

[But, as I say about the situation, the enemy is clearly outlandish as this was a grave blunder, It will reach his highness ears soon. now, We must make a comeback at the situation, I will gladly offer my neck on the plate at a later time.]

Changing by a little wind, the usual dialogue can be heard, Gerhild is tentatively looked up to heaven as she did not have to give him any more medicine.

[How refreshing, well, if you gonna die anyway then, you should die when fought the enemy and drag them to their death at least]

The girl teasing him as she seriously nodded while saying her word of joke.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 33.1

Chapter 33 Part 1

Hence, here come a new arc, most of story will focus on Eleonora.

Part 1

Old Kshyperuk kingdom, east territory.

The land next to foothills of Aubigne mountains that rich with numerous forest that covered the entire area.

“The wide Kshyeru road”, the main highway lie down in the spread forests of Kshyperuk territory have connected a various place together.

[...Although Fontanie had fallen, the air in this forest did not change a single bit....]

Martina’s face showed out of the wagon, she frowns at the scenery with a fierce blowing wind.

With this lush forest landscape, it harder to attack this country, that fact still did not change after she witnesses the scenery of this place.

The gloomy that piled up in her heart finally melt away while she gets away from Fontanie.

The homeland of her husband, Archduke Fernando, now, become the east strategic point garrison base of Jaroudeku kingdom that located in the town.

That right, till the other day, they have been caught in Raspedo castle which once a home of the women.

A place that her husband, the archduke was killed.

No matter how much strong of her will, there still a limit.

To got imprisoned in that place, become a prisoner, it’s not much hard to imagine that how much it become an unbearable pain for her.

[From now on, I can start, I will definitely take this country back from the hand of those guys. Dears(Fernando)...please, watch over us.]

She is now has a purpose that inherited from her husband who served his brother, the king.

A muttering with heavy determination faces away among the wind through the forest.

Nobody should hear such a tweet. but, only a nephew who should have been sleeping in the waiting room. his breathing just went unnatural pace at such a time.

The two Tzendrinble pulling the wagon and run on fire along the highway.

It's destination, the ridges of the majestic Aubigne.

West calendar years 1281.

this year is truly a disorderly noteworthy year among the long time history.

Jaroudeku kingdom, the name of major power country among “the west countries”(Okushiden)—that represent the countries that exist on the west side of Zetterlund continent, suddenly begin its invasion in the neighboring countries.

the begin of “Large western regions war” or know the other name as “Grand western storm war”.

Jaroudeku kingdom turns the table with its overwhelming force than any countries, went overrun the whole coalition of Rokard that adjacent to its border in the blink of an eye, furthermore, It still riding on the tide of war to invade “Kshyperuk kingdom”.

Jaroudeku kingdom and Kshyperuk kingdom are both major power country in the west, their power almost rival and always opposing each other.

At first, the neighboring countries all thought that the fighting between them would continue for a long time.

However, Jaroudeku kingdom has a lot of newly technology innovation, they bring out a powerful silhouette knight and even introduced the very first practical aviation weapon in the human history, The “Airship”.

They gained a one-sided tactical advantage.

Betrayed every expectation, Jaroudeku kingdom forced a total destruction to the enemy and end the war after only six months since the war started.

[Rys-nii, So, where does this horse-drawn carriage is heading? perhaps over beyond the mountains?]

Isadora who next to Emurys asked him while stretching her sloppy rigid limbs fatigued from the ride.

After escaped from Fontanie a few days ago, They ran almost the entire day.

They should gain a lot of distance judging from Tzendrinble speed if they keep heading to east at this rate, it obviously that they will reach Fremmevir kingdom that located beyond the mountains.

From Emurys's social status point of view, this is a country that he went into emigration once in the past.

[Nope, it would be a problem to go home. you see....because I made a promise with my father. So, our destination is on this side.]

[So, are you going to stay in this domestic area? I admitted that this centaur knight is very fast. but at this rate, I could foresee that all black knights will come pouring from every direction.]

Emurys try to cheer up Isadora who cast her glance down with a melancholy look, although it was unnecessary to stretch his chest.

[Hey, Isadora, Cheer up! We did not come here with an empty hand. now, the preparation to counter attack is proceeding quietly too! ...along with everyone from Silver Phoenix knight order!]

[...leave it to Rys-nii's indication is kind of...atleast there still...]

If thinking about his usual confidence basis, It's not easy for Isadora to get rid of her anxiety.

While she was thinking, her eyes settled on the wagon that runs side by side.

There is a single knight that overwhelming an airship with its six demonic arms take a standing posture on the roof.

If it was the man who piloted this thing then something unimaginable may happen...

The girl was well aware that her holding an expectation for it.

And soon, she will realize.

About what on earth that Silver Phoenix knights gonna committed in this land.

Soon, before long, The woods with different color appeared along their way.

“Mishre”, the post town that snuggled on the wide Kshyeru road.

TN: ミシリエ – name of the post town.

Tzendrinble that continue ran at full speed until now finally begin to slow down before the town.

Mishre surrounded with a rough wall and up there, a flag had been raised.

The flag does not belong to Jaroudeku kingdom and a silver phoenix was drawn on it.

Tzendrinble raises up a flag as a signal then the gate greeted them by beginning to open up.

[Auu, this is really tired as expected...Tzen-chan too, you did a good job-ne.]

[Theses guys are running pretty well and smooth control too, I think I may be got addicted.]

Tzendrinble release a tired intake aspirated sound while passing the wicket on the gate.

A lot of people from the surrounding come greeted the Tzendrinble at the parking lot when they noticed its arrive.

When separated the wagon from their machines and heading for the workshop both Chid and Ady were totally exhausted from their knight runner task.

These two machines were overuse too much with the long journey, they are going to need a careful maintenance once.

The knight smiths feel gratefulness toward the twin who turnover, they unload and carry a silhouette gear that stored in the remaining wagon.

[Rys, this town is safe isn't? you really don't mean that it already conquered by Jaroudeku, right?]

[Please be at ease, Aunty. You should already see the flag, right? The silver phoenix that craves on the flag is very our proof.]

Martina's appearance emerge from the door of waiting room in the wagon that opened.

She narrowing her eyes at the origin of hustle and bustle noise that flew into her very ears as soon as she came out.

The knight smiths are using a silhouette gear to run around the place and easily lift and lay down the goods.

She looks at the figure of silhouette knight during it assembly state at the workshop near a parking lot.

This place seems to be full of a liveliness that now lost in Fontanie.

She felt like being released from a prison with the scenery that long time no see and then she heard a hustle and bustle sound from behind.

A beating sound of crystal tissue came from Ikaruga that stood up.

[I gonna drop Ikaruga in the workshop. young master, please bring everyone to the mansion.]

Emurys returned his ok by raised his hand and leading Martina group to the center of town.

However, without many walks, a horse-drawn carriage appeared before them while they are wading through a passer.

A man just came out from the stopping carriage.

He is Baron Modest Retonmaki, one of the small nobles with the corner territory of the east sector.

[Ou! Ms. Martina, So you're safe and sound. although I heard the story from Emurys-dono still...Arrr]

He noticed the person who was hiding behind Martina with hesitation, without care that this place was a roadside, he was taking a gratitude action by immediately deeply down his knee.

[Your royal highness princess Eleonora. It was a truly divine blessing that you survived in this hardship.]

Eleonora Miranda Kshyperuk. the memento of king Agusty who was killed, the only legitimate person with the right to take over the throne among Kshyperuk royal family lineage.

Those who around went on their knee one after another after heard the full emotion voice of baron Retonmaki.

Eleonora who was raised up as a cage bird is unfamiliar against such a direct action.

On behalf of she who still in a confusion, Martina step up and tell the surrounding.

[Retonmaki-dono, and everyone please raise your face. the painful feeling of gentlemen is well understood for her royal highness. however, due to the long journey to this place, her royal highness had become tired. I want you to guide us to the resting place first.]

[Ha! I'm really rude. therefore, we will guide you, please come this way.]

Baron Retonmaki who stood up invited the women groups into the carriage and told the coachman to go the center of the town.

[Ms. Martina, you too also experienced a long journey same as her highness, aren't you tired?]

[...you may be right but because we only have a little remaining time of the current situation, I do not think that I have that kind of luxury time. I want to talk about what to do from now on immediately....]

She suppressed her her fatigue and on the verge of resumes her walk but before that happen, Emurys interrupted her.

[If that the case then, Retonmaki-dono, do you want to resume our "Negotiation" from the other day? I wonder how much gathered here now...]

[Ah, about that, they are impatiently waited here, maybe they want to talk about "an example of blueprint" that they received from you guys on the other days.]

Not too long after that, they reached the large exceptionally building in the center of the town.

Baron Retonmaki told his employee to guide Isadora and the princess to their room while he starts walking to guided Emurys and Martina by himself.

They heading to the room that designed as a meeting place, a lot of people already inside the room.

Baron Retonmaki immediately speaking as soon as he entered the room.

[Everyone, Hear me out, We got a good news! the silver trading firm, Ms. Martina and Ms. Isadora, furthermore even her royal highness princess Eleonora too are here now, our salvation had arrived!]

The pleasure is shaking the meeting room.

Just on the other day, Jaroudeku kingdom has issued the news about "the marriage between the second prince Cristobal & princess Eleonora" which really delivered an impact blow to the surviving nobles.

For them who already disadvantage against the mighty power of Jaroudeku kingdom, this development will eliminate the royal lineage right which means a totally cruel defeated for them.

By know that the princess was rescued from the evil hand of Jaroudeku, there is no more surprise that will bring them more joy than this news.

Martina looks dubious at the people group who are lineup in the conference room that basked with delight air.

[All of you lords(Kikun), Why on earth are you gathered in this place...]

TN: 貴君 = you (primarily used by men in letters to their equals or inferiors).

Those people who have gathered in this meeting room are all the nobles of east Kshperuk territory.

Martina is the grand duchess of archduke Ferdinan which her existence really famous in the east, most of the nobles who are here were her acquainted.

There is also an unfamiliar face among them in addition.

Everyone in this scope is all relatively low-level nobles.

[Now, I'm about to explaining the situation, shall we start?]

Baron Retonmaki who served as a speaker explained the history development up to now.

While Jaroudeku kingdom lay its hand to captured the Kshyperuk royal family, they also stretched its aggression hand throughout the remaining Kshyperuk kingdom territory at the same time.

Their next target is a large number of noble who remain within the country.

Many already fallen along with the king when the imperial city was attacked.

Those who remain are being isolated by the chaos and entirely become the victim of the mighty power of black knight.

Some of them manage to survive but they were disarmed, got confiscated of their property and got stripped of their nobility.

Jaroudeku kingdom is overwhelming and went thoroughly at them.

The remaining majority of nobles, the high-rank nobles who survived are gathered at this place.

It would take too much time and effort in order to eliminate all nobles. after all, it would be inconvenient for Jaroudeku kingdom if the govern structure is totally collapsed.

So, they only conduct a regular patrol in order to subdue and eliminated the weak nobles.

[...now, let me introducing the one who brought up the quite interesting “Negotiation” which spreading around...]

Emurys proudly hit his chest at the previous meaning look of Baron Retonmaki.

While Martina’s face which floated with question change into amazed, Emurys’s smiling at her with a mischievous boy smile and quickly revert into an indeed contrived reverential positive attitude one.

[Now, just as our introduced, We, “The silver trading firm”, are a mere of trade and commerce company. We hailed from the land beyond the far east mountains and judged that Kshyperuk situation is clearly in a difficult state. So, we purposing you an uncalled trading by offering our help, we can’t just let this opportunity pass unnoticed, you see?]

Martina was speechless at the monotone lines as it was a reading speech which really clearly sounds unusual for her.

[You say a merchant is it...? no, no matter how much you pushing it...isn’t a bit too much? are you not shameless about your statement? no matter how much I thinking, you guys definitely an elite who came under the direct order of Rio-Brother right?]

[Ou! Father did say that no matter how much shameless he is, the winner is still a winner!]

[...that it, the thoughtfulness of Rio-Brother that hidden inside this quest is already leaked out...you know!]

Martina sighed.

To even take along an overwhelming unique silhouette knight as this much, It goes without saying that her nephew is trying to help her “country” by entered this east territory.

This means that she who can’t understand his unnatural word can only amazed.

[Due to their firm aid, we are able to gather here.]

Silver trading firm who reached the east territory had keeping perform a raid against Jaroudeku army under the guise of “Contract”

By reducing their number, Jaroudeku army becomes enraged as keep concentrated their force as a countermeasure.

As a result, The patrol force in the east territory is reducing its frequency of patrol.

At the same time, it weakening the observation that put on the small and weak nobles.

[Then, allow me to introduce...Emurys-dono, the one who rescued the princess in order to aid our country and stood behind the scenes that passed around the news to gathered us, which develop to the current situation, in order to allow us, the powerless regained back this country.]

The nobles who gathered for such an occasion too nodded to the grave word of Baron Retonmaki.

Their mind is clearly showed in their face expression. However, Martina slowly shakes her head in denying.

[I'm delighted at your lords feeling. however, to say regain back the country, how are you gonna do that? In the first place, it really sad but our silhouette knight, "Leswant" is clearly inferior to their overwhelming black knight. This is a clearly no chance battle. We never able to manage to grasp any single victory against them. don't tell me that you gonna have Rys group deal with them all, right?]

They are crossing sword many times, they need three Leswant to subdue one Tyrantor and they need to go all at once in order to stop it.

Furthermore, it not simple as saying since Jaroudeku army is used the column wall type formation tactics that protect their side.

Before they able to manage to gang up on Tyrantor with their superior number advantage, Kshyperuk army already suffered a major casualty.

And there still one thing that nailed their coffin, an airship.

With an existence that soars freely in the sky, their unique aviation tactics rendered all of the strategies into useless.

[...fuh, To fight them with only just us is certainly impossible...rather than it, First, we gathered everyone here because we want to sell them our product, after all, we are the merchant, aunty.]

Emurys thumb up in the front with good spirit, then, a petite boy is appearing in the conference room as he waiting for the signal.

The grand master of Silver Phoenix knight order, Ernesti begin to speak with a cool voice while floating a smile with adorable features like his flopping silver-purple hair.

[Now, this may be a bit of arrogant remark but it is an explanation about our new product. let us begin with the review of the prerequisite factor, shall we? your guys have two current biggest problems, one is about the enemy knight that overwhelming you guys and

the another one is a countermeasure for an airship. also, this is about a heavily modification that will apply on Leswant.]

Before everyone knew it, Edgar and Dietrich already appeared behind Eru, silently assembled a blackboard. Eru is quickly attached a few sheet of paper on the blackboard and smile softly.

[This is our, Silver trading firm offering to your solution. please look at the “designed documents” that we distributed to you before time and....]

While his blue eyes are shining with hauntingly light, his state of that time is really terribly happy and start to explain the detail with a professional presentation.

Continue of Part 2.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 33.2

Chapter 33 Part 2.

Part 2

[As long as you heard the current explanation, there should not be any problem. Our group too was able to put a fight with “this”.]

Although Eru’s explanation had ended, the facial expression of Kshperuk nobles who gathered in this meeting room still remains tense.

If you think about their situation until now, this presentation of the silver trading firm can be treated as a great hope for them who was powerless.

However, the weak nobles still on their vigilance, they did not agree immediately.

[The main problem should be time, I think. The design of “this” is too good, It gonna definitely take sometimes. But, now, Jaroudeku kingdom already lost its grasp on her royal highness princess. I do not think that they gonna leisurely waiting for us. If we can’t make this in time before the deployment deadline, We definitely will be crushed.]

[Please rest assured. We already anticipated this matter, We had been prepared a trick that will allow you to earn some time to made it thoroughly.]

Eru keep answered at the flooding question without any stagnation.

Martina could only open her mouth widely at such a scene.

[There still more thing, you may be able to deal with the enemy force that coming from the another territory in time but what about the one that already deployed in the east area? before I came here, they already have a large number of patrol force. we can’t just ignore them, right?]

Martina pointed at the most critical question.

And Eru just answered with a great smile for such a question.

[Please be assured. In the first place, the enemy force in the east territory already been reduced in number due to our previous “Contract”. also the same from now on, as long as the contract still in effect.]

[...I, Is that so...]

All people who gathered in this place already well-known about the rampage that keeps

happening around of the silver trading firm.

However, they did not know why Jaroudeku army called it a grim reaper 's rampage and no one dare enough to ask that question too.

[How was it? Aunty. Our silver trading firm's offering such as "safety" and "war potential". If you want to start the first step in order to regain back this country. then this is the place, I assured you!]

[...fuh, fu fu fuh. seriously...this is really a madness deal. not bad , not bad at all...I accept the contract!]

Got lured by the words along with the clear-cut smile and fearless appearance, Martina too finally allow herself to smile again.

The smiles of two people are indeed similar as expected of the one who shares the same blood in their veins.

At the time that Emurys and Martina on verge of exchanged their "Contract" agreement, they were stopped by the raised voice of the person who behind them.

[Please wait a moment, Young master. Although you are the relative of Ms. Martina but this is involved with the fate of the country itself. We too also claimed that we're a merchant, We can't go around and help on the request without an appropriate remuneration.]

It was Eru, He was panicked at Emurys's behavior that deviated from the plan due to the flow of conversation.

[Oi, Silver leader! just what did you say so suddenly! The silver trading firm is just a public cover. in reality, We are totally different....]

[No, be quiet for a moment, Emurys. his word is not a mistake. We too agree with him. It would be inconvenient for our grace if we only take without giving anything back.]

With her bold heart, Martina turns back at Eru.

Now, she has the mission, to protect Eleonora and take back the country at all cost for the late king and her husband sake.

For that sake, the power of this silver trading firm is indeed necessary.

She may get used to Emurys's temperament but she also well aware that organization relationship does not work that way.

They still lacking a thing to compensate their business partner.

The woman patiently observes the little boy in front of her eyes.

The one who supervise all the people of the silver trading firm(the knight order) that possess both unique trait and power.

Appeared in the form of a young child yet piloted the unique silhouette knight and infiltrated the castle, completed the mission that impossible.

Even a part of emotion such as despise or obligation never appeared on the child's face.

While receiving such a strong gaze, Eru is slowly speaking.

[Our group already decided about our payment, It's a silhouette knight-desu. We want the ownership of every spoil part of "enemy silhouette knight" that we crushed.

[....Ha? just that only?]

[Yes, just only that-desu.]

Martina thought that as a suicide choice but she doesn't have any choice except rely on their power for the time being. So, they would be the greatest of her ally.

Until then, They will keep defeated the enemy for their rewarding.

After all, the enemy hand will not able to reached her easily with that.

In the first place, it already becomes a ridiculous thinking about the reward, just what is the suitable reward that equals to a country?

Compared to her ordinary knowledge about a reward so far, his request is nothing but a small favor.

[well, "If it only this much" then there is no problem at all, We don't have any objection.]

Even there still some distrust remain, the woman chose to ignore it and nodded her head.

But Martina who already holding a relief feeling did not notice it all, about Emurys who was clamoring about it at the start began to quiet at the midway of conversation.

[Okay, then I guess we got a deal isn't... we will certainly fulfill our promise.then no matter how much enemy we eliminated by crushed , broke or slashed, everything will belong to me, is that correct?...]

Eru nodded with a melting smile but his furious murderous intention was leaked along with it.

At that time, Emurys who working along with him knew well about his personality, he began to horrify understood the meaning in that line.

(...it's not "Everything belong to the silver trading firm" but "Everything is mine" instead? Did he really say that?...this is definitely not a misunderstood because Ernesti did not intend to leave any single machine behind, don't tell me that he gonna earnestly.....every single enemy so he can get his hand on them all?!..)

Before he gonna involuntarily stop the talking, he comes up with a better idea.

Since there is no problem with eliminated the enemy as soon as possible, furthermore, both Eru and his aunt also agreed in this matter then it should not a problem isn't?...

thus, Old Kshyperuk principality remnants army accepted the contract of the silver trading firm.

Immediately after that time, the tide of battle begins to greatly shift again.

Continue to Part 3.

PS : look like the boy definitely bring some souvenir back to his home.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 33.3

Chapter 33 Part 3.

Part 3

[The loser should really accept their fate quietly like the loser one, so we can end this without a trouble.]

The black line existence is moving and shaking a cobbled stone that paved the wide Kshyeru road.

The true identity on this intimidate being that contrast to the nature background is the Black Jaw knights which directly marching from the north Kshyperuk territory.

A group that composes of 40 units of Tyrantor—and 20 units of Leswant that gained by requisitioned order, the number almost exactly as a battalion scale.

[...it very rare for the battalion commander himself opens his mouth like that, look like your silhouette knight's loudspeaker just picking up the unnecessary line.]

The man who was assigned as his adjutant of this battalion adjusting his speed to match the battalion commander's Tyrantor and chided him.

Just on the other day, they just received the command that arrived from the HQ, it was made and signed up with join signature names of princess Cataline and prince Cristobal.

Which mean this order can be comparable to the royal decree that usually means for issue the highest priority instruction and important one.

The contents are about pursuing the escaped Kshyperuk royal family and eliminated the rebel forces.

The escaping news of the royal family is very one of greatest confidential even the battalion commander and his adjutant don't know the detail too.

Most of their knights are thinking that this is just a simple eastern area subjugation mission only.

Rather than they escaped, they were taken away instead—the reason behind this concealment is because they fear that this fact will definitely cause a great discourage on Jaroudeku army and pump up the rebel morale instead, this probably leads to their unexpected damage.

[I knew that. So, don't make a fuse, would you?.geez, just who is the pussy one here...

for such a worrywart on the little thing like that in our glory Black Jaw knight order....]

While pushing away his troublesome adjutant, the battalion command disables his loudspeaker.

Black Jaw knights is an elite troop of Jaroudeku army, they were bestowed with many important positions than the other knight order.

Most of it is about dealing with the mismanagement area.

The battalion seems to have arrived at the fort that located along the highway.

This fort seems like to be used as a border checkpoint, it was abandoned in order to escape from the airship's threat in the initial stage of the war.

The battalion is entering the unmanned fort while being vigilance.

[Look like it was a completely deserted. as expected, nothing good remains behind. well, it's fine, I too want to get this inspection over ASAP , start maintenance on the black knight and put up the sentry, we will stay here for a while.]

the battalion commander issued his command and the soldiers began to move all at once.

Since it wasn't abandoned due to battle damage, there is no problem that will hinder them from using it at all.

As it stated that they just took a long journey from the north, their fatigue from the long distance travel is piled up, they need to rest and perform the maintenance with the equipment in this place.

What following the battalion from behind is the logistic corps that carried the supply goods, it coming and entering the fort.

There seem to be facilities to stored their goods in this fort.

There is no anxiety on their facial expression and their tension also decreasing as it was a nature logic which proved that all of them are well temperament control group.

Then,

The incident happened—on the middle night of the second day that they used this fort.

The guards which had been circulated on top of the walls around the perimeter of the fort at that time are very involuntarily careless as they are pretending to do the guard role.

The lacking motivation Tyrantor's search light that keeping stagger projected on the walls.

Inadvertently, that light disappears.

One light two light then, the light that was supposed to be around the walls had been swallowed by the darkness one by one after another.

A shadow appeared on the walls instead of it.

It easily rolled up the guard corpse at its feet and lifted up the torch that fell the ground, the true identity of the shadow is a full cloth armor with total height of 2.5 meters, the silhouette gear "Shadow Rat"

Shadow Rat glanced at the interior state from the walls.

This fort originally belonged to Kshyperuk army. So, they already did a pre-investigation before time in order to grasp the whole internal structure picture.

The Shadow Rat group are carefully looking around from the top of the wall to observed the current state of Jaroudeku army encampment.

After the quick observation, they are all starting to take action at once.

The ruckus sound that roaring in the late of midnight awaken the entire Jaroudeku army.

[...J...Just what is this commotion!?!]

The battalion commander who had been falling asleep in a requisitioned room jumped out of the room with a sword in his hand and shouting.

The soldier who was his subordinate come hurries up at him.

[Plase forgive me, sir! i..it's an enemy attack! they just set a fire inside the fort!]

[What did you say!? just what the hell are the guard doing!? ...Nah, leave that aside for now, just get some soldiers put off the fire first! the rest go deal with the enemy, do not let them leave this fort alive!!]

The battalion commander heard the reply of the soldiers with an uncomfortable tone causing him to have a bad feeling.

[Ar...It about the enemy, sir!.... the enemy are using a strange small size of silhouette knight, our flesh and blood soldiers are no match at all! furthermore, those guys already climb over the walls and run away to the outside, Sir.]

[Haa? just what ridiculous thing are you saying!?....forget it, forget about the fire, go get

the knight runners, send out the silhouette knight to chasing them at once!]

After received the instruction, the knight runners are immediately moving.

Several machines of Tyrantor and Leswant are starting up and began to sortie in order to chase the escaped assailant.

The direction that assailant escaped to is a forest along the highway.

Silhouette knight is a giant weapon that hard to move in the lush forest which richly in trees.

But even it is an advantage for a silhouette gear, a dim forest on the midnight really hindered field of vision which is limited how fast they can run.

Tyrantor starts up its back-weapon, and shoot out into the woods.

The black scenery that silhouette gear blend in darkness is elegantly blown up with explosive flame.

The angered silhouette knight troops fiercely following it.

Although silhouette gear can run faster than a horse, it still can't match the speed of running silhouette knight that larger in size, the distance between them is keep shrinking.

In the meantime, Tyrantor's back weapon is shooting out a bullet but the surround trees become a shield of their target unexpectedly.

It lost the sight of the target during the flame explosion of the trees, the silhouette knight corps increasing their speed to run faster.

—underneath the armor of Shadow Rat, the wearer floating up a smile.

The Shadow Rat group did not just run blindly, it runs to the destination in their mind, through the “gimmick” that placed at the lower part and stretched around the bottom area of trees.

There, the enraged Tyrantor still following them vigorously.

The Tyrantor got distracted with the appearance of silhouette gear, end up not able to noticed the gimmick at its foot.

Immediately after that, the Tyrantor's foot hit something on the front and fall vigorously

It was a powerful falling to the front, its armor got squashed, hit the ground and keep skate with the remaining momentum.

The rest of silhouette knights which followed it closely from behind try to do an emergency stop in a hurry but, it already too late.

Several silhouette knight fall into the trap of the gimmick and ungraceful went down, tumbled

[What happening? there was something down there, the thing that stretched around is... a steel wire!?!]

[Kusso! such a thief trick! they set up a gimmick trap in the woods!]

The poor visibility in the dark night already enough to makes it difficult for silhouette knight to march in the forest. So, it almost impossible for them to notice such an inconspicuous trap.

During that chaos time, they already lost a track of silhouette gear from their view.

However, if they continue to chase it again, they probably meet the same trap again.

If they wary about the trap too much, they will not able to catch the silhouette gear.

An angered sound is venting loudly in the wood of night.

[...b, by the time we came out from that zone, the thief already all gone....]

The captain of silhouette knight squad who returns to the fort is now reporting his result to the battalion commander while soaking in cold sweat.

Once the battalion commander heard it, he raises up his voice while distorting his facial expression.

[Dame those annoying thief! they really come thoughtful prepared...just what the heck is that thing!? Kusso, So, what becoming of the fire situation in the fort?]

[Ha! , We already try put it off with the silhouette knight but it obviously that the enemy was set up the fire with “Demon Beast Oil”. even now, the flame is still strongly burning and struggling, Sir!]

Demon Beast Oil is an oil which extracts from the monster that living from the east side of Aubigne, a special oil that rich with fat.

Once it lit up, it will burn vigorously and hard to extinguish, a perfect tool for sabotage operation.

[Damn them all...over and over again, damn. So where and what did they burn!?!]

[Ha! some of the army provision and the especially spare parts of silhouette knight, many of them were targeted.]

At that time, the irritation of the battalion commander already reached its peak.

Although he was almost involuntarily burst out his anger, the fact that his subordinates still stood before him make him swallowed it back somehow.

Among the goods that were burned, the army provision is already a big problem but the spare part for the silhouette is the most serious problem by many times.

While the black knight displays its mighty power in combat, at the same time, it also takes a heavy burden from the rotation of its part.

Most of the factor that reduces its durability is its own weight, in order to have it continuing display a high performance, a regular maintenance on its body is necessary.

So, the main question is about the crystal tissue that using here.

The main force of Jaroudeku army composes of Tyrantor which is utilized a strand-type crystal tissue.

Now, that rope-type crystal tissue spare part for the sake of maintenance was lost among the goods that were destroyed.

[What did you say? at this rate, isn't it gonna be the main problem for marching operation?this is a direct royal command from his highness himself, you know? such a whining is not allowed!]

The battalion commander and his adjutant looked at each other, they are the expedition troops, so, no way that they gonna received an often replenishment supply.

They need to makeshift with what was left behind in order meet the expectation.

[It can't help. I just remembered it, there should be a normal type crystal tissue for the requisition Leswant left, right? let use it as a replacement. go tell the blacksmith guys since the strand type is no longer available now.]

The new question now is, could Tyrantor used the normal tradition crystal tissue as its spare part? since it was supposed to resupply with a rope type.

As a result of this specific order, the involving technician corps had to do the makeshift maintenance with an original type rather than the supposed strain type, this result will cause a heavy burden to the unit when it marching

The damage from the sabotage under the moonlight was focused on the goods, human life, but the damage in strategic view was small, in the end, Jaroudeku army had resumed its march that was already late behind the schedule again.

But of course, no one says that the sabotage is ended with just this one.

The following incident happened when they were progressing on the highway.

A large arrow attack was suddenly flying and raining upon the marching Jaroudeku army, it was fired from the siege weapon that lay in the forest from the side of the highway.

Although their silhouette knight raised up their shield in a hurry, most of the arrows ended up targeting at the wagon of the logistic corps which enraged the soldiers.

Once the assailant sidelong glance at the coming silhouette knight group, they skillfully retreat.

Moreover, a steel wire is laid out around the entire forest, the same trap that the pursuit force tasted on the night which forced the silhouette knight to stop chasing them half way at that time.

By travel on the horseback a long time, their legs became dull.

Furthermore, since they became more wary about the repeating attack, their marching speed was even more slowly.

Most every one of Jaroudeku army did not expect that the attack will happen during their march. So, what followed after that is, they are enraged and acted separately, the assailant easily switched the location and aimed at the other different target.

The main target is the logistic corps that transporting goods for the invasion troops.

They are marching from the northern territory of Kshyperuk which already dominated by the Jaroudeku kingdom.

With that reason, they let their guard down and ended up as most of the supplies were burned from the raid, a serious damage.

[Ei, again and again, this is so damn annoying, They just aim for the supply that comes this way only, even we had the airship pressing them from the sky, Are those guys fearless or something?]

Up until now, Jaroudeku army was able to re-supply safely without a problem due to the existence of airship.

They can easily find a silhouette knight from the sky, So, the attempt of Old Kshyperuk

army that tries to attack a supply line ended up with failure and was crushed in advance many times.

Before the great advantage being from the sky of Jaroudeku kingdom, such an attempt is not different than a suicidal act.

But the assailant in this time did not use a silhouette knight. Rather, they are using a small size silhouette knight instead.

To discover the assailant that skillfully hide in the forest from the sky is prove to be extremely difficult.

Thus, Jaroudeku army can only afford to do a standstill defensive while the supply units end up received an attacked many times.

In order counter this, the supply unit begin to increase the number of their escort. despite they got attacked fewer as a result, their movement becomes inevitable slowly in exchange.

This becoming more serious situation than they thought.

Due to the raid, the Black Jaw knight order gradually begun to run low on supplies.

A silhouette knight is a weapon that cost a ton of capital and it even more expensive when coming to the large black knight.

Even the supplies that they holding also has a limit.

Furthermore, the maintenance corps haul a big load in order to come here.

By one-sidely destroyed the Kshyperuk army so far make Jarodeuku army become more arrogance.

They are unaware themselves that they now begin to get nerve and tingling, even their movement become more dull and duller.

As the marching in the favorable weather suddenly hung up with the storm on the horizon.

The black jaw knights marching on the highway begin to get far and farther in distance on the slightly elevated mountain.

The appearance of them from there can be seen as a crowded population.

[...look like the enemy's vigilance has become quite strict. It should probably be the time soon, right? Our effort in laying foundation has come out quite well.]

The one who muttered is Nora of the Blue Falcon knights, what behind her from the distance is the array line of the decorated Shadow Rat.

The men from her group also return the girl question with their nod.

By participated in the activities of Silver Phoenix knights so far, Nora also learns how to manipulate silhouette gear, she led the silhouette gear troops

The assault that acted on Jaroudeku army at this place so far was all work of this girl group.

A group consists of people with many talents combination with a silhouette gear.

[From now on, It will be the work of the main force of Silver Phoenix knights and the nobles. Our group should hurry up get back and prepare for the next move.]

The cool pupil stared at the land of the east, she earnestly prepares the stage that will become a full-scale crashing.

The shadow group left the area and ran away through the forest with such a gale speed.

Continue to Part 4.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 33.4-33.5

Chapter 33 Part 4 & 5

Part 4

The Black Jaw knights battalion was under attack from time to time and received a considerable damage but on the other hand, they still manage to reach their next destination somehow.

Now, they walking silently and become less talkative as the high morale that accompanied them at the beginning stage now mysteriously disappears, soon, the appearance of the walls that cut off the highway come into their view.

For anyone who came from the north, this walls belongs to the city that known as the gate of the east, “The Fortress City Jeedon” is outstanding appear before them.

This city had been established a trade route with Fremmevir kingdom via the “East-West highway” and also leading to the north-south road of Kshyperuk, it very well known as the very important strategic point.

For that sake, The city itself was surrounded by a solid circle walls which designed to give a high defense capability to the city.

[...All forces, halt immediately!]

They already running low on supplies plus piled up a lot of fatigue to the point that probably dangerous even for the elite Black Jaw knights.

It can't help that the soldiers feel relief in their mind since they had reached the city that can be used a base for resting.

However, The battalion commander ordered them to stop before they can enter the city.

The battalion commander manipulated his Tyrantor to point its finger at “That” to his adjutant who sent him a puzzled look.

[...Why is “Our army's flag” did not raised up in that city? nah, what the heck in the world is “That flag”?]

A portrait of a silver phoenix which spread its wing was drawn on the flag that proudly fluttering on the fortress city Jeedon's wall.

“Flag” is something that used to display the affiliation of the force in order to identify friend or foe.

The reason that Jaroudeku kingdom's flag did not raise on it can be only one meaning.

[...how stupid. as expected of pussy person level, figure it out by yourself, would you!]

The battalion commander shouts a dispute and ordered the entire battalion to prepare for combat.

The rebellious intent is so clear, there is only one thing can be done.

[Since the city was very well protected by the thick walls, they probably got conceited, right? Look like they have some smart ass soldier but it's useless before our black knight, don't expect that you guys will receive any mercy!]

Until now since they came to this land, the Black Jaw knight was continue being harassed by the sabotage act. right now, they want to use this chance to venting their frustration.

For the city that was supposed to be their resting place after long distance travel betrayed them as soon as they reached it, this really adds the furious fuel to their emotion even they are exhausted.

They fold their rank quickly and advance by walking with intimidating air.

[Front Wall Formation!! front row used sword stance! go crushed those fools!]

Tyrantors that on the front row of row wall type formation ready its stance with a war mace

TN: war mace = a small version of battle hammer.

Tyrantor already possesses a great power, when it used a war mace in large number, it can do damage on the walls.

That why a battle hammer was miniaturization into war mace, in order to attack the walls with sheer strength numbers, A tradition tactic by destroying all target at once.

The fortress city Jeedon did not show any reaction against the black wave that surging before it.

Since it really hard for the mass production type of Kshyperuk to win against Jaroudeku's black knight.

It was a fact that repeated in history many times that Kshyperuk side always fights by the wall, not on the field and end up turn into a siege campaign.

They always saw it every time on the battlefield, always a sight.

That why the black knights pushing forward without suspect anything and about to entering the silhouette arms range from the walls.

When they step on that range, the Kshyperuk's silhouette knight finally shows themselves on the walls

The black knights who move forward did not give them much an attention since some stray shot from silhouette arms won't do much damage to the heavily armored Tyrantor, They calmly thought like that.

However, the battalion commander who observing the entire situation from afar is the first and foremost one who noticed about the abnormality.

[What...is that thing? It's not a Leswant ...It's "a different type"!?]

The lined up of silhouette knights that appeared on the fortress city Jeedon's walls had a great different form from Leswant.

The machines that appeared from the spire that integrated with the walls had an armor which is strangely round almost like a "Cylinder" attached around its frame.

Hence, The mysterious silhouette knights are extending "4" silhouette arms from their back and stretch it forward before the line of sight of the puzzled battalion commander.

It possesses the same back armed system that was adopted in Jaroudeku army.

Its arm also grabs its silhouette arms that attached at the gap between the addition armor along with the other 4 armed.

The silhouette knight that able wield six silhouette armament at the same time just lined up on the walls, the battalion commander had reached the conclusion the moment that he witness such a scene.

[...It not that they did not approach us but there is no need for them to approach in the beginning! this is bad. that thing will...black knight....]

His shouted already way too late at that time.

In the next moment, the lined up silhouette knights that take a shoot stance released their magic bullet all at once.

The destruction power is far beyond the standard silhouette arms.

With the hex gun that continues to shoot a magic bullet in succession, The storm of the ferocious magic bullet is poured down upon the black knight, created a tremendous explosive of a flame wall.

Develop the momentum that sent every black knight crumbled on the ground.

And it not only just that.

While he staring at such a scene, a sling attack begins to fly out from the fort.

The black knights already devoted in defense against the storm of magic bullet. and now, they took a direct hit from the stone bullets that just comes flying at them from a different angle

No matter how much thick armor that Tyrantor had, If they took a direct hit from a stone bullet without defence, they will not come out unscathed from it.

The pride of invisible row wall type formation that they boasted is now being ripping apart for the first time.

Despite that, Tyrantor too did not yield on receiving only, it tries to retaliate by start up its back armed and fired.

Its shot landed a direct hit at the Kshyperuk's silhouette knight that stood on the top of the walls but the surrounding armor is too thick plus only a few shot manage hit it.

The distance between two silhouettes, the altitude, greatly reduces the accuracy of the black knight's bullet.

[Kusso! Just what the heck is that thing! How can it still able to shooting silhouette arms non-stop like this!?!]

A stone throwing and magic bullet attack, under attack by this two type of projectile weapon cause Jaroudeku army to struggled, eventually, they begin to feel a discomfort.

A magic weapon is a powerful weapon but it consumes a lot of magic in order to use it.

If they continue to shoot a large volley of attack like this, their mana pool should run out soon.

However, they still able to shooting continuously without stopping.

It so clear that the enemy must have some trick behind it.

[Damn it, Since this is not a strength contest, they purposely keep up the distance from the beginning!? How impudent!...At this rate, we will take too much damage, messenger, tell the entire battalion to fall back at once!]

The battalion commander shouts an instruction while smiling with a blue vein on his

forehead.

Tyrantor has a heavy armor but the enemy attack powerful enough to punch through it.

With low mobility—It's inevitable that Tyrantor gonna take a great damage before it can reach the walls.

They have to deal with this place with a long term invasion strategy instead.

Right now, even without an enemy, the black knight troops already exhausted by a piled up fatigue.

They are not in a state that allows them to combat at all.

Now, Jaroudeku army who started this war tasted its first defeated in the fort capture campaign in the history.

While confirming the retreat of Black Jaw knights, Kshyperuk soldiers who stood above the fortress city Jeedon's walls being to move in a hurry.

[Jaroudeku army is retreating! Vid's squad! Cease fire!]

[Now is our chance to do resupply before they come back, All soldiers hurry up the sling reloading!]

[Lower your silhouette arms, Vid's squad keep it like that in order to threaten them while recovering mana pool at the same time.]

The silhouette knight squad that sit in the row is releasing an intense intake and aspiration sound from ether reactor while holding their silhouette arms.

The name of the machine that having a shape like a cylinder is "Leswant Quad"

It was a machine that builds from the blueprint that handed ou in a various place by the silver trading firm, from Ernesti's proposal.

By used a Leswant, the mass production machine of The Ancient Kshyperuk army as a base, It was upgraded with the multiple back armed "Capacitive Ram" which just simply attached on its back.

TN: Capacitive Ram type silhouette arms - as Its name suggest, a weapon that already stores an energy inside the gun and can shoot out right away, A mana support from silhouette knight's ether reactor is not necessary. I think.... [An energy gun with power bank built-in function] if you ask me...

The main focus of this upgrading is the "Wall Robe", a large addition armor that covers the machine frame.

A Capacitive Ram needs to use with this strong armor as the armor itself has a built in mana pool larger than the amount that one Leswant can possess.

Leswant Quad has an enormous mana pool due to its large capacity and can wield multiple silhouette arms at the same time, it is a machine that extremely specialized for single-minded attack from range

Unfortunately, Its existence was a rush job and lack a lot of adjustment from the start plus the weight of wall robe really too far heavy for moving, as a result, it can only use in defense situation only.

In the end, It's some kind of defective machine, even so, it already strong enough to deal with Jaroudeku who did not know this fact.

[Look...That Jaroudeku army, are fall back on the highway! We really did it! We had protected this town, We won!]

The scenery of the retreated black knights who had left the vicinity of the city spreading to every soldier's mind.

Not too long, they begin to groans and finally become an explosive delight cheer.

The commander is relatively calm while watching the situation among the delighted soldiers.

[Finally, a victory isn't? Although, we just able to drove them away just once. even the damage they receive is not a little, they probably come back to attack gain. may be, I should keep a tab on them with a high alert.]

Leswant Quad which has a high aptitude for base defense does not allow them to pursuit or attack, its mobility it too low.

Still, they decided to rejoice the victory in front of them for now as Jaroudeku army has completely retreated.

Part 5.

The news about the victory of the fortress city Jeedon is now, spreading around the local area.

This news will definitely raise an unstoppable great momentum that grows the rebellion next to the princess Eleonora's retaken news without a doubt.

Until now, only Silver Phoenix knights can match Jaroudeku army toe to toe.

However, If only them able to fight then in a true sense, it is not a victory at all.

By obtained the new Leswant Quad here, the ancient Kshyperuk nobles is now able to prominence step up in the battlefield one after another.

The domination power of the east strategic Jaroudeku army force begin to unstable by a revolt of the small nobles, the land of the east is turning back into a “Battlefield” once again.

Furthermore, the Black Jaw knights were completely struck between the north to a south route of east territory by the defense line of Leswant Quad.

The Jaroudeku already received an unexpectedly large damage by the sabotage of silhouette gear troops before time.

Now, their plan is messed up as they need to re-schedule many times.

The east upheaval that happened in a short period of time had forced Jaroudeku army to reorganization and renew their prospect while Kshyperuk remnants army which only has Leswant Quad too was in a state that unable to move.

The battlefield is heading to a state of equilibrium which a tranquility visit upon the western grand storm.

West calender, Year 1281, the fall is now approaching.

Half year ago that Jaroudeku kingdom made its declaration of war.

Now, the fight is about to enter a new phase.

Knights & Magic - Volume 4 - Chapter 34.1

Chapter 34 Part 1.

Well, sorry for late but I was occupied during these 3-4 days.
And Part 2. is also large, I hope I can complete it in a week.

Part 1

Mishre, The town that existed at the end of the east, among the cities in the ancient Kshperuk kingdom's eastern territory.

Recently, the city that once known as a post town had been changed dramatically.

Now, there is a various workshop spread over the place as the symbol of the town

The town atmosphere is dominated by a hot air that leaked from the workshop that continues to work non-stop regard day or night.

Its source is moving around in a factory, the machine with the total height approximately 2.5 meters, suited up by the people is currently moving a complete set of strand-type crystal tissue around with the supply mana from its wielder.

All process of work that done pure by the machine power.

That machine is a silhouette gear. "Motor Lift"

Most of the blacksmith in this factory is now using this Motor Lift to performing all task that involved with smith work.

[Ou! You there! The one that looks run dry of mana, go take a break for a while! You will drop dead if you keep it up like that, I don't want an unnecessary problem! ...for the newbie, progress a little bit is good enough, you will get used to it before you even know it, you know?]

A strong shout came flying through the blacksmith workshop which filled with the noisy sound of smith work.

Then the reply also came back with a loud voice to the origin of warning voice.

One man is keep instructing Kshyperuk's blacksmith group who not familiar working with a silhouette gear, as they would reach their limit as soon as he leaves them alone.

He is the origin of the voice that yelling around here and there while supervising all the work lie with his reasonable blacksmith look.

Furthermore, it even more surprising that he did that while he too in the middle of his blacksmith work.

He also uses a silhouette gear to work same as the other blacksmiths. however, His unit appearance was clearly different from other.

By used its arms as a crane to do heavy lifting work, the entire four arms from both sides is swiftly handling the work with high precision.

There also a cover that called “Iron Fence” to protect the wielder, a rack for storing various tools is added on it.

Furthermore, a storage box to store a material such as screws and piece of iron was attached to its underbody.

Its leg is very heavily thick with high stability looking, probably to support its weight.

As a result,

It is nothing more than four arms with a sense of stability, a very stocky one, however, it had continued to working with bewildering momentum.

Quite a strange sight.

This thing—is the captain of Silver Phoenix knights blacksmith corp aka David Hepuken—personal silhouette gear, alias, “Dowbuzzfist” (Heavy Mobile Workshop) in a brave figure.

He is one of silver phoenix’s blacksmith corp of Fremmevir kingdom that used silhouette gear to do blacksmith work in order to enhance their ability.

They initially purely work with silhouette gear, eventually, even him also has a personal silhouette gear of his own, it very efficiently to do the work since it was his own custom.

His unit almost has every function that needs in this kind of work, a crane arm that can lightly lift a difficult huge part for a human power also grab and handle the work firmly.

Its arm also have five fingers same as “Shadow Rat” since with the exclusive dwarves knowledge, he can easily reproduce the technology and make a powerful machine part

Furthermore, It equipped with magic type torch for welding work which allows this sole unit to rival the entire large scale blast furnace ability, quite a ridiculous thing to finished this stuff.

[Master-san! Can I have a minute—!]

Anyway, a voice is coming through the full noisy sound in workplace call out the master who is currently manipulating his four arms to the full extent.

[Ou, so it's you, silver boy! wait a bit, after I finished this thing!]

Master had round up his work and issued a further instruction to the surrounding and went out from the work while sounding a profusely heavy footstep.

Eru, the one who called him is merry looking at the blacksmith group's appearance in the workshop.

[um, um, look like the Motor Lift's introduce is going well-ne]

[fuh, At first, they really reluctant at it since they never see one before, but after I demonstrated it with my Dowbuzzfist, they become obediently used it in one go. Well, for the time being, now, we are focusing on creating more silhouette gear fo their colleagues after they got used to it. I think we probably got a lot of them immediately since it easy to create a standard type for the work(Motor Lift).]

The another reason is Master's group existence also terrifying them to that extent too.

Eru nodded with satisfaction.

The mass production of silhouette gear can be done with a different ratio than a silhouette knight.

Soon, there will be a plenty number of it.

They introduced a silhouette gear and mass produced it in order to rebuild the Kshyperuk remnants army which currently in a bad shape.

[Look like this is a good place for preparation-ne. Let's proceed to jump ahead to the next stage since we got more helping hands. First, let us...]

[Ou, I thinking about breaking the ice with those guys soon, gonna use them for this detailed Leswant's blueprint that I got.]

Eru reply to Master who took out a bunch of paper and shake it around with his wry juvenile smile.

[As expect of true friend, you really not good at socializing with people-ne.]

[Ou, you bet, well, It thank to the sloppy socialize relation with you for a long time, I think. Furthermore, this is my field of work, and somehow, I relly don't appreciate at this new Leswant looking. It completely looks like Kardator from head to toe!]

Eru who received a bundle of paper from Master assent with his words.

[Eh? but in the end, the new model must at least have enough performance, isn't? right? As its designer, I have no choice but to use the design of "Kardetolle" since there is no time to think a new one.]

[...To even bring out our "exclusive goods"... not matter how much friendly of this country is, I think that you give it away too lightly.]

[To tell the truth, I was allowed to have some good discretion from his majesty the king so we should have the permission.]

[I also thought that his majesty too, is not the type who easily forgive people...]

Master leaked a long breath and stroking his beard while his heavy mobile workshop's arm is swiftly moving around.

[Because there is nothing else that useful more than this, by used Kardetolle as a base structure, this definitely revives Leswant again for sure. Since our situation really is limited with not much time, It not like we can do it leisurely.]

[Yare-yare, Isn't this young pal also merciless a little bit? to asking the individual blacksmiths here to do a specification task, this is not something that can be done in day to day even without sleep.]

Master is slapping his fist while smiling a very likely fearless smile.

Somehow, He wants to ask a question since he gonna betting on it.

[There still one more thing, it about use production's hand of "Our team" that is what I really want to ask.]

[Just drop the refrain, this gonna be one hell of strict order for the first time in a while, right? then, what is the problem?]

[It is about our remaining problem, I think we do need to prepare one of "Ground to Air Equipment", After all, I did not manage to capture an airship last time, It is not cool at all. this thing is necessary for the silhouette knight to fight it somehow.]

Master is floating a surprise thought as Eru's dialogue.

Because he had heard that Eru and Ikaruga almost dominated an airship during the rescue of Kshyperuk royal family.

[Is such a problem necessary for you and Ikaruga?]

[Nope, but this is for the other people except me and Ikaruga. to tell the truth, The airship was retreated with a mortifying thought from Dee-san before. So, I want to put something that can threaten them a bit, they may be more hesitate if “the sky is not safe anymore”.]

Master return a nod at Eru’s explanation while thinking whether such thing possible or not.

As expected of Eru, Master Himself never thought about a weapon that use to fight a ship the fly in the sky before.

However, this may be a simple thing for Eru who created a number of bizarre equipment so far.

Which every one of it was actually done by Master’s hand.

So there is no need to thinking about whether or not anymore.

[The rest thing that we need is a time for us to complete the new model. We better roll out the ground to air equipment as soon as possible since the enemy will definite attack us soon with their ready condition. well, let have everyone do their best, shall we? since we were chased here, there is no place to retreat anymore, It gonna be a real war starting from this place, Isn’t fun that way?]

Eru is smiling a very fulfilling smile in lovely features with his clear purpose, but to master’s vision, It was a smiling of young demon with hell looking.

Continue on Part 2.

Take your favorite novel wherever you go
novelepubs.xyz